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CONTENTS VOL.33/NO.1

Iris Bodemer
Neckpiece, 2010
sterling silver
3 ¼ x 10 ⅝ x ¾"

4 **Foreword**

UNDER THE COVERS

12 **On Jewellery**
URSULA ILSE-NEUMAN

IN PRODUCTION

16 **Denise Betesh**
ANDREA DINOTO

LOOK

20 **Paying Attention**
PHIL RENATO

IN MEMORIAM

59 **Yatsuki Hiramatsu**
HELEN WILLIAMS DRUTT ENGLISH

VALUE ADDED

60 **Please Touch**
MEGAN AUMAN

64 **Society News**
DANA SINGER

FEATURES

22 **Michael Good: Making Metal Dance**
Michael Good's long courtship of the laws of physics has yielded a graceful body of work in metals.
ANDREA DINOTO

30 **Variations on Silence: The Jewelry of Iris Bodemer**
Although reticent about her work's meaning and materials, Iris Bodemer's jewelry can speak for itself.
MARJORIE SIMON

38 **Kevin O'Dwyer: Metal In and Out of Time**
Deftly merging the ancient and contemporary, Kevin O'Dwyer produces engagingly original metalwork.
JOHN K. GRANDE

46 **Nature and Structure: The Balancing Act of Charles Lewton-Brain**
Charles Lewton-Brain's expansive metalsmithing career has embraced the roles of teacher, inventor and author.
BARBARA ISHERWOOD

EXHIBITION REVIEWS

54 **Knitted, Knotted, Twisted & Twined: The Jewelry of Mary Lee Hu**
JUDY WAGONFELD

55 **Forces of Nature**
SARAH TANGUY

56 **Out on a Limb: Contemporary Wood Jewelry**
KIM CRIDLER

57 **Lola Brooks: Charted Territories**
ANDREA DINOTO

Cover: Michael Good
Wave, 2011
patinated bronze
14 x 10"
PHOTO: DON FREEMAN

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FOREWORD

MICHELANGELO FAMOUSLY SPOKE of his sculptures as lying in wait within the marble. "Every block of stone has a statue inside it," he claimed, "and it is the task of the sculptor to discover it." One might extend this view and say that all art involves making latent content manifest in the world.

Similarly, physics instructs us that there is potential energy stored within all matter. This principle is poetically expressed by featured jeweler Iris Bodemer, who speaks of such energy metaphorically, musing that "all the lines are already in the pen....maybe it is better to leave them [there] as a pure option?" Fortunately, Bodemer has chosen to tap the hidden potential of diverse materials to reveal an engaging range of formal options in her jewelry. In this, she joins the other spotlighted artists within this issue, each of whom mindfully court metal's inherent possibilities.

Cover artist Michael Good has become the oracle of the technique known as anticlastic raising. A connoisseur of metal's plasticity, Good coaxes rippling curves out of bronze sheet with the firm understanding that "when the edges of a plane are stretched, relative to the center that's compressed, the metal will move away from center" resulting in a saddle-like bow.

Charles Lewton-Brain is to fold-forming what Good is to anticlastic raising—a guru in the field. Likewise, it is a keen attentiveness to the natural proclivities of metal that allows for his innovative structures. "In fold-forming we are working close to the limits of the material," says Lewton-Brain, "for when you push the material, the laws of nature show up."

Rather than cultivate one technique or format, Kevin O'Dwyer exploits metal's vast versatility. Ranging from small boxes to architectural bridges, his work incorporates motifs that span archeology to new technology. In a recent collaboration O'Dwyer even produced 24k gold-plated shoes for a couture collection shown on the runways of Paris and Milan. With such creations, the potentiality of metalsmithing is literally transported onto an expanded world stage.

SUZANNE RAMLJAK
EDITOR

The mission of *Metalsmith* magazine is to document, analyze, and promote excellence in jewelry and metalsmithing. In fulfillment of the goal of producing a significant document of the field, editorial content will emphasize contemporary activities and ideas, with supportive content to include relevant historical work and critical issues.

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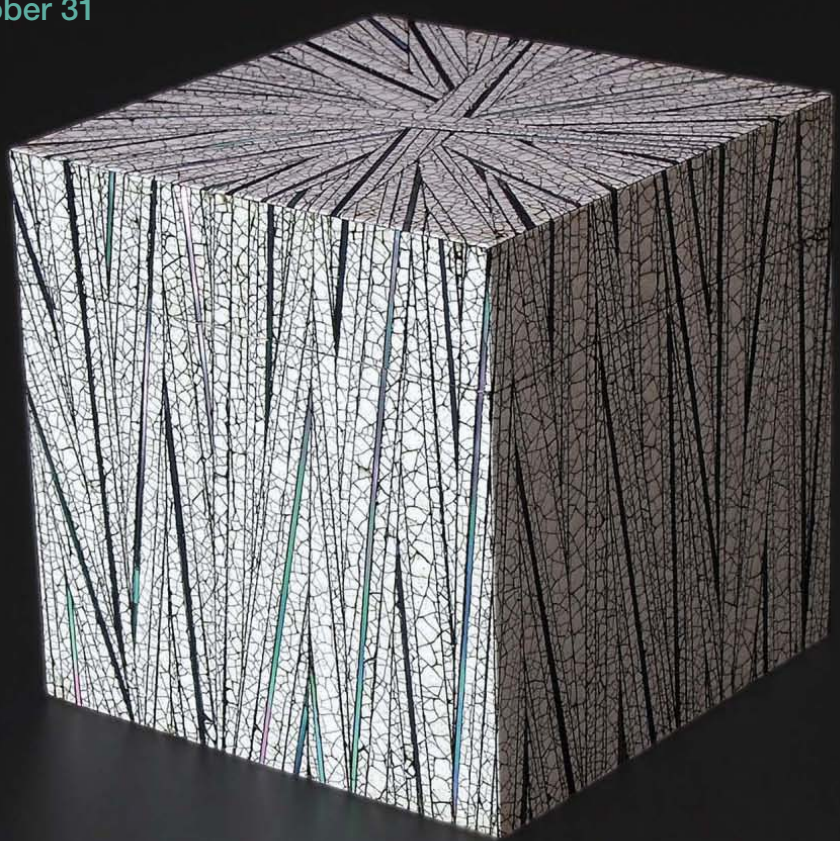

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Captions: George Sawyer, *Cosmos brooch / pendant*, 18kt yellow, 14kt gray gold and patinaed sterling silver set with diamonds with a 3.01ct Tsavolite and an 8.81ct Kunzite © 2012 George Sawyer; Buccellati, *18kt yellow and white gold hand crafted one-of-a-kind bracelets*. Photo: Buccellati.

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On Jewellery: A Compendium of International Contemporary Art Jewellery

LIESBETH DEN BESTEN

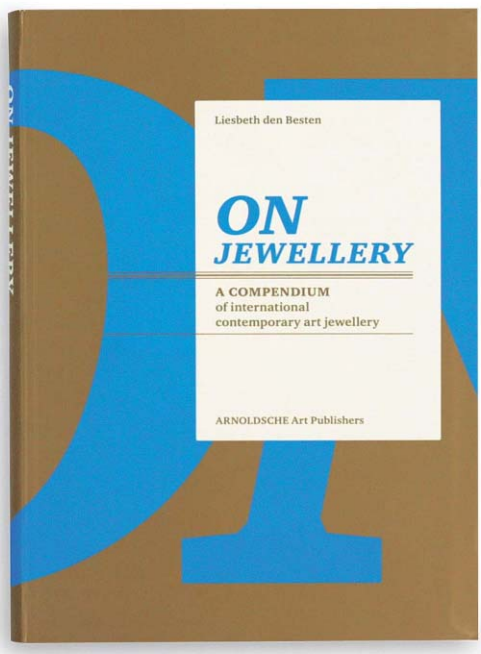
ARNOLDSCHE ART PUBLISHERS, 2011

BY URSULA ILSE-NEUMAN

THERE HAS BEEN NO dearth of publications in recent years in which attractive presentations of new jewelry take precedence over the written word. In a world that values both the sight bite and the sound bite, we have a welcome alternative in *On Jewellery*, an amply illustrated, well-researched, and thought-provoking collection of essays by Dutch curator and art historian Liesbeth den Besten.

Covering the field from the late 1960s to the present day, den Besten uses fresh insights and a lively, non-academic writing style to place contemporary art jewelry within the context of current trends in art and society and within a broader, global perspective. The book's stunning color photographs, together with a selection of smaller black and white images, are intelligently chosen to serve the text and complement den Besten's insights into the kaleidoscopic world of art jewelry.

In her Introduction, Den Besten stresses the importance of viewing jewelry firsthand in order to assess it fairly. Despite the inherent wisdom of such an approach, the unavoidable result is that den Besten's essays focus too narrowly on jewelry from Northern Europe—particularly from the Netherlands. Den Besten readily confesses to this restricted focus and even suggests that the book might more appropriately have been subtitled "From a Dutch Perspective." This limitation aside, den Besten's eminently readable essays succeed in raising the level of discourse about essential aspects of the contemporary jewelry field to such a degree that this important volume earns my Book of the Year Award!



For the initiated, the book reads like a reaffirming but fresh account of what art jewelry is and how elastic and stimulating its approaches and concepts continue to be. For the uninitiated, it provides convincing proof that art jewelry is a bona fide form of creative expression within the shifting nexus of art, craft, and design. Den Besten's introduction is a provocative review of the evolution of "the new jewelry" over the last forty to fifty years and the inexorable blurring of the boundaries between fine and applied arts and design. Nine essays follow, beginning with "The Meaning of Jewellery," a spectroscopic analysis that opens with the complete lyrics for "Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend," Marilyn Monroe's show-stopping song in the 1953 film *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*—a novel and effective way of demonstrating what pioneering art jewelers were up against in challenging jewelry's deep-rooted associations with wealth, status, and precious stones and metals.

Reading more like lectures than essays, den Besten's arguments are underscored with supporting illustrations and brief but valuable analyses of the philosophies informing certain artists' creations. Although well-known Dutch and Scandinavian artists such as Ted Noten, Philip Sajet, and Tone Vigeland are featured, her reach also includes Lisa Walker and Warwick Freeman from New Zealand; Poon Passama from Thailand; and Jiro Kamata from Japan, along with artists from other countries, notably those who have studied or lived in Europe, which includes a great many.

In "A Short History of Jewellery and Photography," den Besten contributes to our understanding of the synergy between these two distinct but complementary mediums. Works by Bettina Speckner, Ramon Puig Cuyas, and Gijs Bakker support her case for the broad-based use of photography in contemporary jewelry, but her argument would have been even stronger had she also included such prominent artists as Kiff Slemmons, Thomas Mann, and Nancy Worden from the United States; Kirsten

Den Besten's eminently readable essays succeed in raising the level of discourse about essential aspects of the contemporary jewelry field to such a degree that this important volume earns my Book of the Year Award!

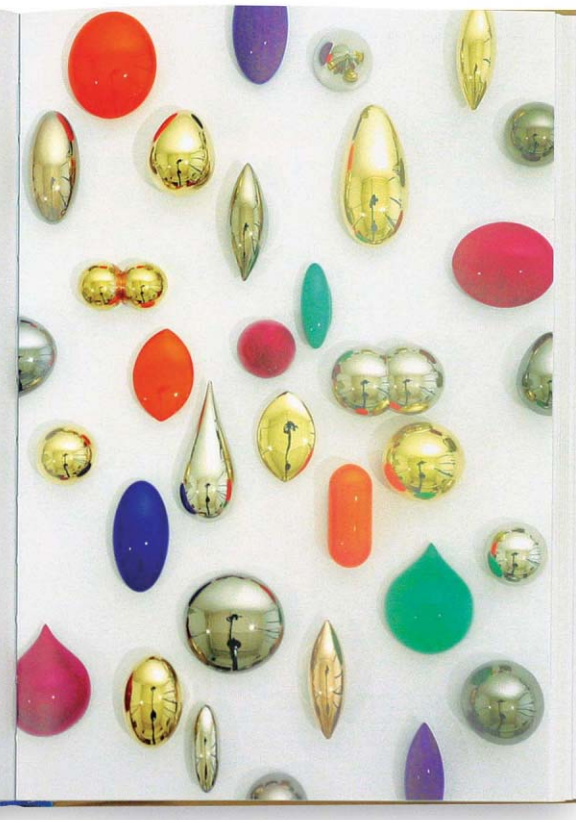
4

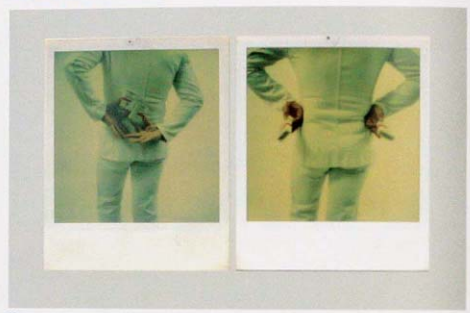
5

6

4 Warwick Freeman, brooches *Fern, Fish, Feather, Rose*, 1981. 925 silver, stainless steel, various dimensions. The Auckland Museum. /// 5 Warwick Freeman, brooch *Green Face*, 1998, greenstone (nephrite), resin, 925 silver, Ø 4 cm. Te Papa Tongarewa Museum of New Zealand, Wellington. /// 6 Mette Saabye, *The Brooch Collection: Guldbrosche* (Golden Brooch), 2008, 24 ct gold leaf, metal, plastic, 8 × 8 × 0.5 cm.

7 Noon Passaia, *Extra Button (Edition 2011)*, 2011, electroformed copper, silver and gold plating, car paint, acrylic, readymade button pin, various dimensions

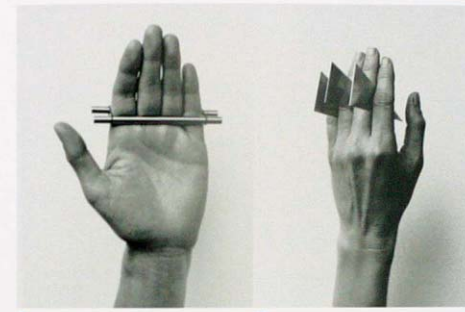




27

28

27 Robert Smit, Polaroid project *Everyday Adornments*, 1975. 70 Polaroid photos. The Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. /// 28 Otto Künzli, *Autometrophobie*, 1976, photographs, 12.5 × 9.4 cm. Collection of the artist.



29 a

29 b

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29 a, b Otto Künzli, *Arbeit für die Hand* (Work for the Hand), 1979–1980, pieces: stainless steel, rubber, photographs: 12.5 × 9.4 cm. Pieces: The Austrian Collection, Vienna, photographs: The Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (part of a series of 12). /// 30 Otto Künzli, brooch *Cetaphobie*, 1982, wallpaper, hard foam, 17 × 8.8 × 9 cm.

Den Besten recognizes jewelry's enormous potential to act as intellectual and emotional provocateur.

Haydon from Australia; and Beverley Sims from South Africa.

Den Besten is to be applauded for the valuable contribution she makes to the field in "Beyond the Showcase," an essay that should be read by anyone responsible for installing art jewelry. Here, she argues irrefutably that placing art jewelry in a vitrine or display case stresses its preciousness and role as a commodity, changing our appreciation of it, frequently in a way that violates the intention of the artist. Bolstering her point even further, she devotes considerable attention to alternative ways in which jewelry can be shown, with particular reference to the often-radical methods employed by Otto Künzli, a dominant figure of the 1980s whose events extended into performances that were themselves works of art. Den Besten does a remarkable job of recreating the world that Künzli shook up at the time, as well as acknowledging the lively and stimulating discussions and disputes his radical jewelry encounters inspire to this day.

Storytelling and symbolism are the subjects of "Reading Jewellery," and here the strong narrative tradition of American jewelry is noted with examples by Melanie Bilenker and Bruce Metcalf. To Den Besten's credit, she tackles the very complicated issue of what constitutes narrative in jewelry, reiterating that narrative need not be strictly figurative to tell a story.

In "On the Fringe," den Besten reveals herself to be adventurous and open to following jewelry artists who venture beyond the far out to explore the furthest out. Her central conviction is that art should challenge conventional thinking and that jewelry, as the most intimate of the arts, has a unique role in transforming minds. Here, den Besten also discusses jewelry as installation art—a form of presentation that appeared on the art scene in the 1960s. As artistic interventions, jewelry installations can exist either within the architectural space of a gallery or elsewhere in the urban or natural environment. Den Besten recognizes jewelry's enormous potential to act as intellectual and

emotional provocateur and to reveal complex, philosophical thought processes, particularly when coupled with other media. This capability was prominently on display in "Jewellery Unleashed," the exhibition she curated at the Museum of Modern Art in Arnhem, the Netherlands, in 2011.

The next three essays—"The Body," "Jewellery and Ornament," and "Jewellery and Tradition"—cover more frequently discussed territory, albeit with new insights into changing modes of expression, using prominent artists as examples. Gijs Bakker's progression through different styles, for example, is traced from his abstract-geometric works in the 1960s and '70s through subsequent forays into Pop art, the neo-Baroque, and even Kitsch, with its often perverse extremes.

A final essay, "Collecting Jewellery," quotes actual sales prices in order to draw inferences regarding the vagaries of the market and the relationship between artist and collector. Den Besten also discusses important museum collections and how they were acquired. This is no academic exercise, but a lively recounting of the changing life of a piece as it passes from artist to gallery to wearer, and ultimately from wearer to museum (without implying that such a progression is necessarily a good thing).

An added pleasure is the way den Besten's book is structured. By coming at the subject inquisitively from novel directions, den Besten avoids the trap of chronology and frees readers to pick and choose the chapters that interest them most at a given sitting. I, for one, could not wait to delve into "On the Fringe."

On Jewellery ends with a useful listing of international art institutions, galleries, and websites devoted to the field. One hopes that the number of significant museum collections, galleries, and artists' contacts listed in the first printing will have steadily grown by the time the third printing comes around; the second one is already well on its way. This uplifting news is a testimony to the accomplishments of the author and publisher, but also to art jewelry's astounding achievement as an important force in the visual arts with a vitality that is only beginning to make its mark.

Ursula Ilse-Neuman is curator of jewelry at the Museum of Arts and Design, New York.

Denise Betesh
A Golden Bond

BY ANDREA DINOTO

Chains
22k gold

FOR DENISE BETESH, who has been working in buttery 22 karat gold for the past 20 years, "what's important is making jewelry that's not a fashion statement but something to be cherished and honored." Working from her Santa Fe-based home studio, Betesh produces all of her pieces by hand with the help of one hard-working bench assistant. Her matte-textured jewels evoke the classical examples and techniques in which she was trained, albeit with contemporary flair. Woven chains, heart-charm earrings with interchangeable drop elements, and gem-set rings are among her timeless designs.

Betesh, 58, studied jewelry making in the 1970s at the Museum School of Fine Arts in Boston, where she was able "to access pieces in the museum's ancient jewelry departments and study design, technique, and engineering." She became adept at granulation and chain weaving, noting: "It was authentic. We alloyed the gold, milled it, pulled it to wire, wrapped it around a dowel, sawed the coil, closed and fused the links, interwove them." Betesh further perfected her skills at the Jewelry Arts Institute (formerly Kulicke-Stark) in New York.

Jeweler Denise Betesh consulting with client in her Santa Fe studio.

Making a chain, says Betesh, is "a time-consuming labor of love" that demands anywhere from 15 to 30 hours of work—each link is fused rather than soldered. She regularly makes "a dozen different versions" of each chain design, producing them in light, medium and heavy weight. In some, the ends of the toggle bars are set with small diamonds; but stones play a more dramatic role in her designs for rings, earrings and, recently, green sapphire bead necklaces with gold toggle closures. "I usually introduce new designs after the [annual] Tucson gem show," she says, "which sets the tone for my palette." Betesh sells about 500 pieces a year in a price range of around $600 for charms to upwards of $3,000 for chains. "We probably produce another 100 pieces for inventory," she explains, with her assistant handling all aspects of bench work, while Betesh does most of the finishing, stone setting, developing new designs, not to mention invoicing, shipping, making QuickBook entries and other office tasks. "We do work a lot!" she says, emphasizing that she never fails to reinvest her earnings back into the business, which from the start has been self-sustaining, "growing steadily year after year."

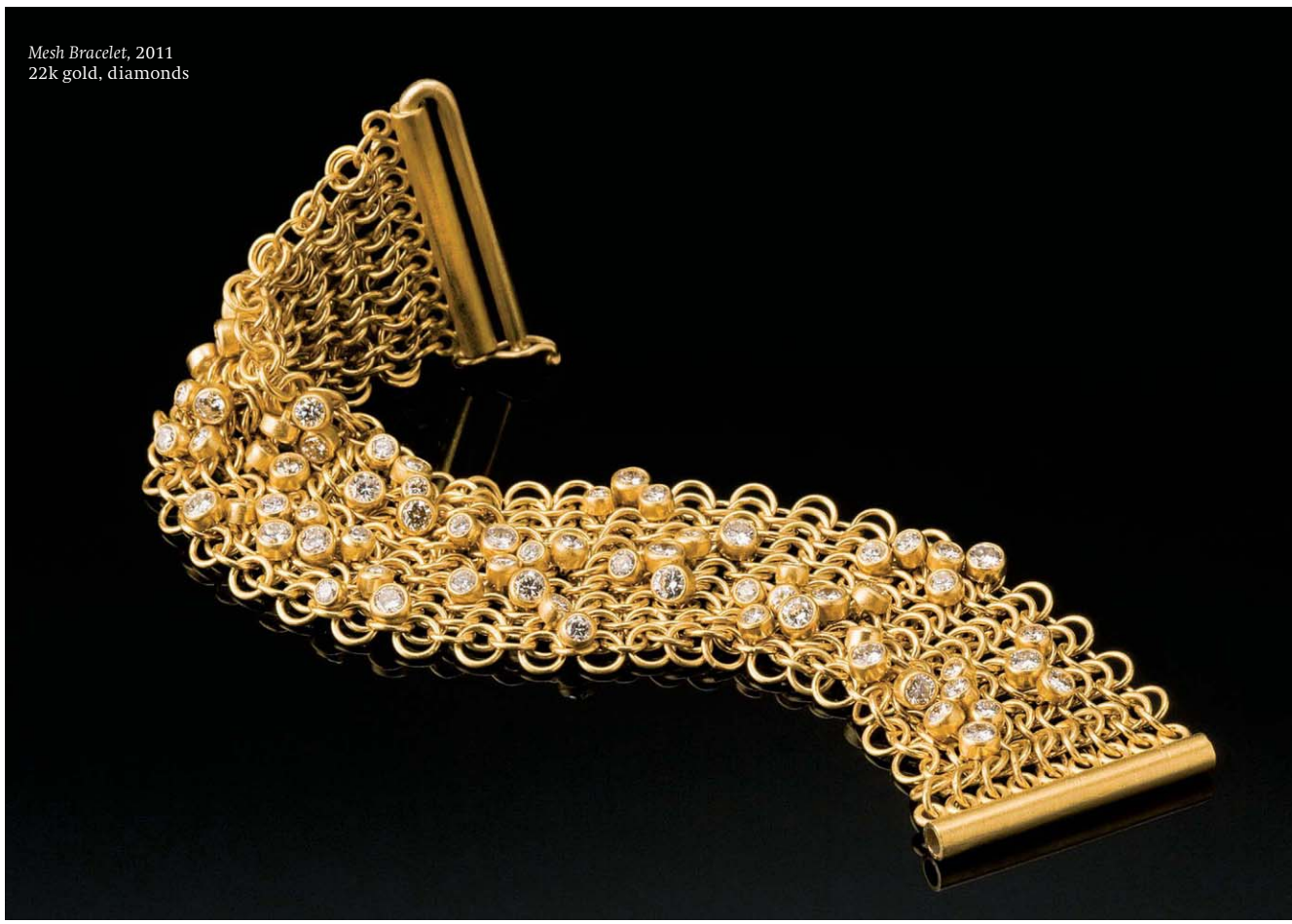
Betesh's path to fine jewelry was, admittedly, a bit eccentric. In the sixties, she crocheted vests and sold them to the New York department store Henri Bendel. She also dabbled in stained glass and basket weaving, but it was her macramé wedding rings woven from gold wire that caught the attention of Cartier's Aldo Cippullo (designer of the store's signature "love" bracelet). Betesh was only 16 when he commissioned her to make similar elements for pendant necklaces that were sold at the posh emporium. (She made them on the subway going to and from school). Cippullo encouraged her to pursue a jewelry career, which led to her training at the MFA, but Betesh delayed launching a business; instead, she spent ten years cutting hair at the Vidal Sassoon salon in Manhattan. "It wasn't until I moved to Santa Fe in 1989 that I actually settled on becoming a jeweler," she says, noting her good fortune in selling her entire first small collection to a boutique owner whom she met while on vacation in San Francisco. "She admired my earrings and bought all my pieces." Similarly, at the first show Betesh did with Accessory Circuit in 1997, the upscale Japanese retailer

I think of myself as a person, an artist, a jeweler—not a brand.

Takashimaya bought her entire case for its Fifth Avenue flagship store. "I was the first fine jeweler they brought in, and I've been very blessed," says Betesh. Indeed, she is one of a handful of art jewelers for whom the escalating price of gold has, ironically, proved to be a boon for her business. "People actually feel they're making an investment now," she says, "and I don't want to see the price go down, to have the pieces devalued."

In recent years, Betesh has been selling directly at three or four ACC shows where she enjoys interacting with customers and observing how they respond to her work. She is also represented in over a dozen stores around the country, and one in the UK, which together generate about 60 percent of her annual sales. Despite her success, Betesh resists branding because, she says, "I savor the process of discovery. I think of myself as a person, an artist, a jeweler—not a brand." She accepts commissions and enjoys working with clients—"designing with parameters"—through stores, or directly as with a recent piece she made at her father's behest for her mother's 75th birthday. Betesh created a chain-mail bracelet of 576 fused links with "75 plus one-for-good-luck" linked-on, bezel-set diamonds that came originally from a necklace that had belonged to her grandmother. "It took an obsessed week to make," says Betesh adding, "I have not yet done another."

Andrea DiNoto is a New York-based writer on art and design.



Mesh Bracelet, 2011
22k gold, diamonds

Phil Renato
Paying Attention

OBJECTS COMPETE FOR our attention, and we all have different ways of ignoring, understanding, ranking, and using them. There is a part of me that agrees with McLuhan's premise that a particular design doesn't matter, rather it is the medium itself that communicates and makes an impression. On the other hand, the teacher in me has to believe that some designs are better than others, so I use Donald Norman's assessment matrix, which evaluates things in Visceral, Behavioral, and Reflective categories.

Through my camera I collect thousands of images as evidence for arguments I might never make. I look for things that might help me counter all of the comments I've heard from practitioners stretching to pat themselves on their back with "skilled"

"We shape our tools and thereafter our tools shape us."
– Marshall McLuhan

hands controlled by lazy brains. I care about how things are made—by whom, for what purpose, and under what circumstances—but not to the exclusion of what an object looks like, and what it means to *me,* and how *I* can use it. What it may mean to its maker is largely irrelevant.

An object must be attractive in order for me to attend to it, so I find myself ignoring most of the artwork I see. I'd rather walk through a flea market with a friend in search of things whose functions I can only guess at (like a gigantic pair of pliers for castrating bulls). The objects that I value most change me for having interacted with them, but almost never because they were intended to do so. Most things that persist in my imagination have attached themselves to other things I know and care about: speed, spectacle, sex, science, love, death, process, travel, history. Displayed on these pages is a cross section of objects that have recently captured my attention, and that I am still trying to understand.

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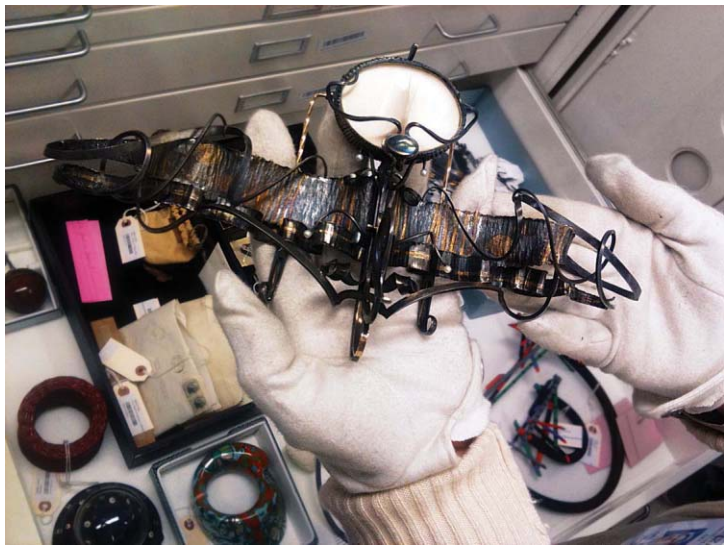
PAMELA ARGENTIERI
Life and Death (bracelet), 2012
copper, graphite drawing on enamel, SLS nylon, pearls
3 ½ x 8 x ½"
PHOTO: MATTHEW HOLLERN

Monet Jewelry Company,
Page from design archives
PHOTO: PHIL RENATO

JUN SUK MIN,
Orbit-Series No.1 (bracelet), 2012
sterling silver, 14k gold filled, synthetic ruby
PHOTO: PHIL RENATO

GENERAL MOTORS
2012 Chevrolet Camaro SS (detail)
North American International Auto Show, Cobo Hall, Detroit
PHOTO: PHIL RENATO



ALBERT PALEY
Sectional Brooch, 1970
sterling silver, gold, ivory, pearls, labradorite
4 ¾ x 9 ¾ x 3 ½"
Shown by Elisabeth Agro, Associate Curator of American Modern and Contemporary Crafts and Decorative Arts, The Philadelphia Museum of Art
PHOTO: PHIL RENATO

MATTEL
Barbie Super Jewelry Center, ca 1999
injection molding accessory creation toy
PHOTO: PHIL RENATO

LI ZHENGYONG AND XIONG ZHIYUAN
Bubble Necklace, 2011
silver plated nickel (from Kaili City, China)
PHOTO: PHIL RENATO

EDWARD BARBER
AND JAY OSGERBY
Olympic Torch, 2012
gold plated aluminum
height 31 ½"
PHOTO: PETR KRATOCHVIL

LELO
Alia Vibrator
silicone, electroformed ABS
PHOTO: PHIL RENATO

KATJA PRINS
Anatorium, 2003
object, glass, sealing wax
5 ⅞ x 3 ⅜ x 4"
PHOTO: EDDO HARTMANN

Michael Good:
Making Metal Dance

BY ANDREA DINOTO

Wave, 2004
patinated bronze
height 8"

Open Trica, 2004
patinated bronze
height 7"

Orion Earrings, ca.1995
18k gold
height 1 ¼"

To meet the man is to be drawn in to his unique craft-based art, his metaphysical connection to form, and his expansive world view, all of which resonate to the tapping of a ball peen hammer.

IT'S NOT EVERYONE who wakes up in the morning thinking about the properties of non-definitive forms (the universe, galaxies, etc.) or the profound beauty of a hyperbolic paraboloid—a shape in nature with infinite perimeters. But then, not everyone is Michael Good—master metalsmith, teacher and philosophical raconteur—whose jewelry and sculpture embody theoretical concepts that inhabit the minds of physicists, and whose everyday conversation is grounded in geometric principles. Listening to Good can at first be mystifying to the uninitiated; but to meet the man is to be drawn in to his unique craft-based art, his metaphysical connection to form, and his expansive world view, all of which resonate to the tapping of a ball peen hammer.

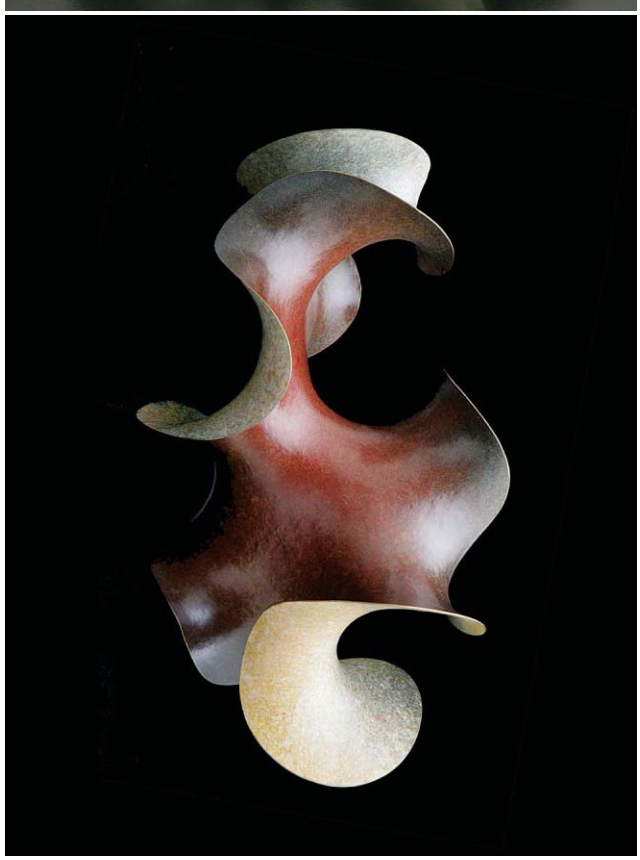
On a day in April, 2012, Good is using just such a hammer to transform a roughly five-inch strip of "new gold" (a light-weight bronze alloy) into a double-helix, the spiral form familiar as a graphic rendering of the molecular structure of the genetic code. He taps the plastic hammer on the metal over a sinusoidal (snakelike) metal anvil. Tall, kindly and infinitely patient, Good is holding forth, talking as he works, at New York's 92nd Street Y, where a group of rapt students—both serious amateurs and pros—have gathered for a week-long workshop, eager to learn from the master who, at a youthful and energetic 70, likes to refer to himself as "an old hippie from the woods who decided to do things my way." The daunting technique that Good has come to teach is now familiar to veteran metalsmiths as anticlastic raising: Sheet metal is stretched at the edge and compressed at the center until it resembles a saddle shape, with curves going in opposite directions. It's a basic, yet complex form—in mathematical terms, the aforementioned hyperbolic paraboloid—the ultimate demonstration of metal's plasticity. Good chats away, explaining fine points of anticlastic technique—"you want the peen to fit the curve"; "follow where the give is"—as he effortlessly demonstrates the challenging forming (not forging) process that will produce, after much repeated hammering, annealing and cooling of the strip, a metal ruffle that might become an earring or brooch, or a torque reminiscent of those made by craftsmen during the Bronze Age.[1] This is deep craft, and, "like all very beautiful things, very simple," says Good. Such simplicity is the result of devoting the better part of a life to the process, coupled with Good's uncommon talent for coaxing impossible forms from single strips of gold or bronze to make objects as delicate as a gold loop earring—his signature, 30-years-in-production design—or as graceful as a spring-like sculpture that resembles a möbius strip dancing to the music of time. In all of Good's work, the basic anticlastic form begins as one continuous piece made without solder or construction (his jewelry eschews findings). Think of Picasso drawing with light, or Jackson Pollock slinging a line of paint, then slow it down, way down until the gesture transmogrifies into a fluid, stop-frame form, and you have an idea of how a Michael Good piece—sculpture or jewelry—comes to be. Good says he "rarely draws anymore," and encourages students to "work in your head three-dimensionally," as he does.

Arame (cuff), 2011
patinated bronze, 22k gold
width 1"

Open Baroque, 2009
patinated bronze, 22k gold
height 5"

HPE (hyperbolic paraboloid extension), 2010
patinated bronze
height 6" and 7"

Wave, 2009
patinated bronze
height 9"



When Good is not giving workshops at places like Penland, Haystack Mountain, and the Y, he's at work in his Rockport, Maine, studio where he's lived with his family since the 1970s. His distinctive gold, and silver, jewelry production line is the family business: Good directs design; his wife, Karen, a full partner, handles all business operations, while Good's daughter, Avi, focuses on public relations and sales. She also directs the family's year-round gallery in nearby Rockland, Maine, which carries Good's designs, along with those of many other craft artists in various media. Working with four full-time metalsmiths, Good produces jewelry for both the retail and wholesale markets where his loop earring design reigns supreme.

It was Good's fortuitous meeting with the Finnish metalsmith Heikki Seppa that set him on the path he would come to master. Seppa's book, *Form Emphasis for Metalsmiths* (1978), was the first to urge "an increased consciousness of form and a searching examination of both old and new techniques." He decried the undeveloped state of metalsmithing at that time—"sheet metal being used as if it were plywood, cardboard, or a pane of glass, the plasticity of the metal being altogether neglected." As a spur to formal exploration, Seppa introduced the term *anticlastic raising*[2] to classroom curricula, stating "it is now time for the art to move on to a higher creative plane, with a professional language all its own, and a greater awareness of its potentials." As Good explains, anticlastic is reverse raising, or the opposite of synclastic raising, the traditional method used to create shell forms—cups, bowls, coffee pots and such. The anticlast sets the metalsmith free to pursue pure form. "When I met Heikki at Haystack in 1978," says Good, "I was doing a primitive form of anticlastic raising. We became instant friends, and he showed me how to do everything properly."

Proof of that are the innovative forms Good devised for his jewelry, starting in 1980, when he began applying the anticlastic method to gold. "I don't design by thinking of something and then making it," says Good, "I follow the formal evolution of the thing itself. It's like music. You know when it's harmonious and when it's not." For Good, gold was the "perfect material" prized for its inherent value, color, and rarity. "Because it was so costly," he recalls, "it was important that I treat it with respect." He also realized that by specializing in gold he would be able to build a reputation and establish a business, if at first a very small company. Good's design breakthrough came with his adoption of the spiculum, a hollow tapered tube, like a porcupine quill, that could be formed into expressive loops, knots, and swirls. The resultant graceful designs for earrings, bracelets, brooches and torques brought Good wide recognition in the U.S. and abroad. Another exquisite innovation was the ruffle—a form resembling seaweed—which Good produces as cuffs, brooches, and torques in patinated bronze finished with a fire-gilded edge. The form is in no way a frilly, girly sort of thing. In Good's mathematical envisioning, the ruffle—as demonstrated to the Y students—is "actually a section of the double helix and an infinite surface in three dimensions." To make one, Good

Pod, 2009
patinated bronze, forged iron
height 19"

first forms the metal as a double helix, i.e. folding it into a tight, closed spiral; then, as the spiral is gradually opened, the ruffle begins to reveal itself. It's a thrilling moment, and if you think it sounds easy, Good advises it takes two to three years of training before a metalsmith can begin to achieve a piece of saleable quality.

About fifteen years ago, Good began turning more frequently to sculpture. His first pieces, made from silver, were based, not surprisingly, on the essential fluidity of the spiculum line. Precious metal soon gave way to bronze as he began to hammer out curving ribbons that achieve a sense of monumentality despite their relatively small size. Good explains that "keeping sculpture to tabletop scale is a purely practical question" relevant to tooling. The broad bronze ribbons he uses to create a variety of graceful, intricate forms, most enhanced with colored patination, require kick presses to aid in bending and shaping the metal, and Good has adapted vintage machinery to this task. In his earliest attempts at anticlastic forming in the 1970s, he recalls, "my first idea was to work with this level of size." He wanted to make sculpture from the start, but foresaw the difficulties he'd face in trying to make a living as an artist. He also realized that his anticlastic shapes "were beautiful, lent themselves to jewelry, and worked incredibly well." The forms, Good says, "mimic nature, they mimic the human body," resulting in a popular line that sustained his business and allowed for experimentation and the further development of his technique. Now, three decades on, Good has down-scaled the jewelry business and is turning back to the sort of sculptural forms that started it all. His gallery/studio in Rockport presents a sampling of his sculpture, which he characterizes as having "non-definitive form," or anticlastic curves. "This simply means," he explains, "that when the edges of a plane are stretched, relative to the center that's compressed, the metal will move away from center and the [edges] will never meet." As an example, Good points to a

I follow the formal evolution of the thing itself. It's like music. You know when it's harmonious and when it's not.

Good's nest sculptures—"one of my many works of madness," he quips—are among his most mesmerizing and complex achievements.

green-patinated dynamic bronze form that appears frozen in undulant motion. Another non-definitive piece, a bronze spiral, reacts to his touch with a bouncing movement. "All these anticlastic pieces are basically springs," he says, noting that this property enabled him to design earrings in one piece, with built-in spring closure. Spring movements are related to the metal's thickness and the size of the coil, says Good and represent a dynamic found throughout nature;"everywhere you look...in fact all of nature is one big non-definitive movement."

Good's nest sculptures— "one of my many works of madness," he quips— are among his most mesmerizing and complex achievements. While at first they appear unrelated to the ribbon forms, a single nest is actually constructed from over 150 interwoven, anticlastic metal strips—ruffles, ribbons and grooved leaf forms, in varying shades of muted, green patination. About a foot in diameter, each nest is assembled entirely without soldering. The idea for the nests

Nest, 2009
patinated bronze, forged iron
12 x 15"

Nest, 2011
patinated bronze, forged iron
12 x 18"

arose from Good's friendship and collaboration with the late enamelist Marilyn Druin. Good had first seen Druin's gorgeous enameled eggs at an ACC show in Baltimore in 1998 and remarked they needed a proper nest, "so I made her one in 18 karat gold." In Good's design, multiple golden anticlast ribbons and leaves are woven into a circular nest to hold the eggs. After Druin's death in 2001, Good remained intrigued with the nest format as "a way of doing all these ruffles and anticlastic curves...putting them together to give a sense of the organic nature of these movements." The nests also provided an opportunity to experiment with color, something he yearned to do after having admired Druin's dazzling enamel work. Goode hired Carlton Leavitt to oversee the patination, and their collaborative process has allowed Leavitt's subtle palette of earthy tones to perfectly complement Good's elemental forms. In some pieces, the patinated bronze ribbon is gold-fused on the reverse side, producing a melding of sensibilities that touches on the essence of Good's art and craft.

Good is now working on ideas for larger pieces, including a fountain for his home in Puerto Rico based on the heliconia, a flower with a pitcher-shaped blossom. Water will descend from the synclastic flower forms, which will be supported by anticlastic trailing vines. But scaling up in bronze, says Good, requires special retooling. To that end, Good is building a powerful reciprocating hammer that will help him form bronze ribbon much larger than what is now achievable. "I think the increase in size for a lot of these shapes would be spectacular." No doubt, but ask Michael Good if there's a difference in conceptualizing a piece of jewelry versus a piece of sculpture. "None whatsoever," he answers. "Really, I'm dealing with movement, a very abstract concept that only becomes relevant to time or space when I try to make an illustration of my thought process." Fortunately for us, Good continues to manifest his dynamic visions in metal.

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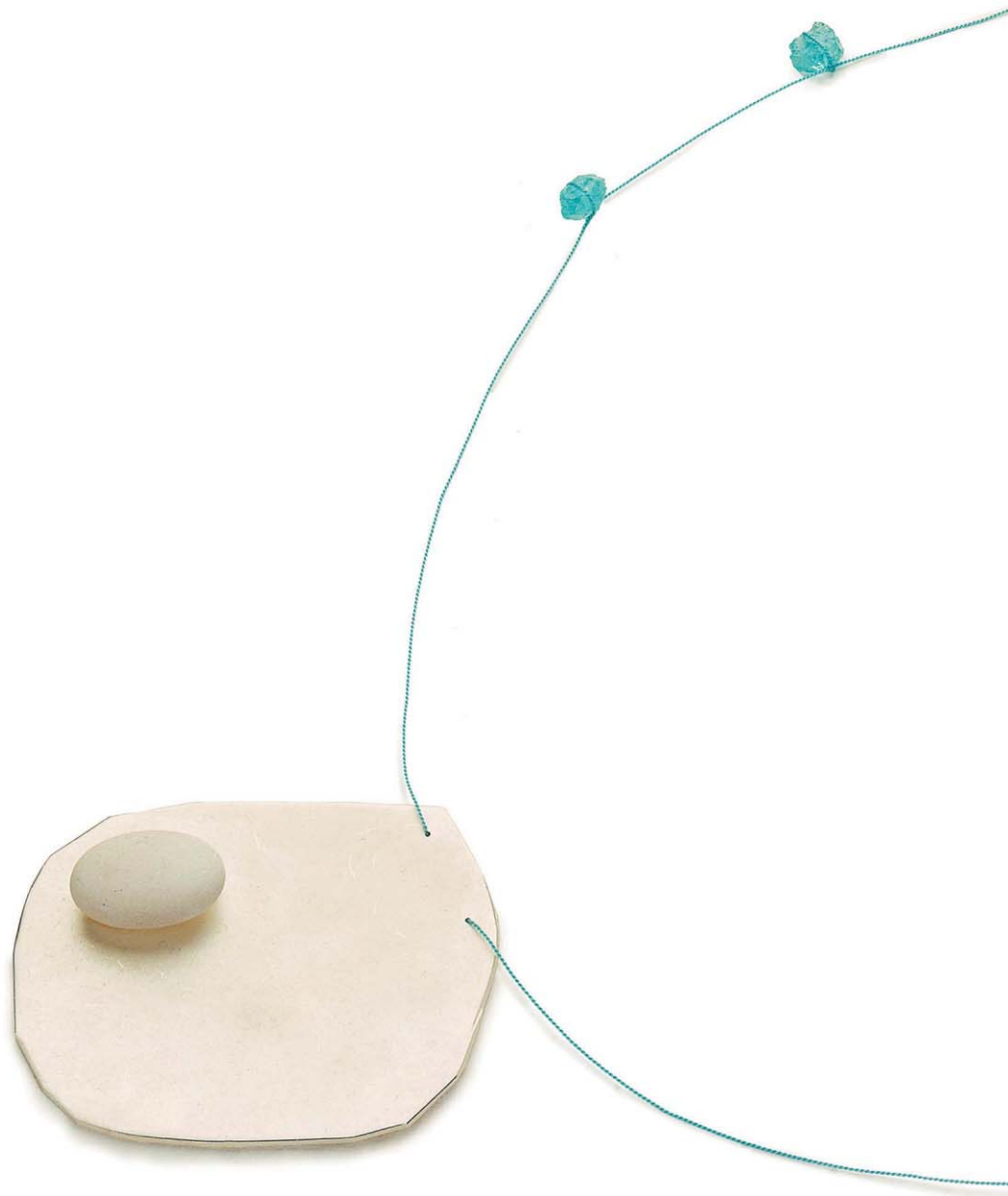
1. At the *International Symposium on Ancient Gold and Technology* in 2002 in Madrid, Michael Good, together with Irish metalsmith Brian Clarke, demonstrated the method by which Bronze Age craftsmen made the beautiful gold ribbon torques found in 1200 B.C. Ireland. Their presentation, based on collaborative research, revealed for the first time that antlers were undoubtedly used as tools to form the tightly coiled, pure gold ribbons that became the lightweight neckpieces seen in the National Museum in Dublin. This was the earliest known example of anticlastic raising, whose secret had been lost until rediscovered by Heikki Seppa in 1977.
2. The term anticlastic derives from the Greek *klastos*, to break. Historically, rudimentary anticlastic techniques were used to create spouts, handles, and lipped edges for synclastic vessel forms.

Furthermore:
www.michaelgood.com

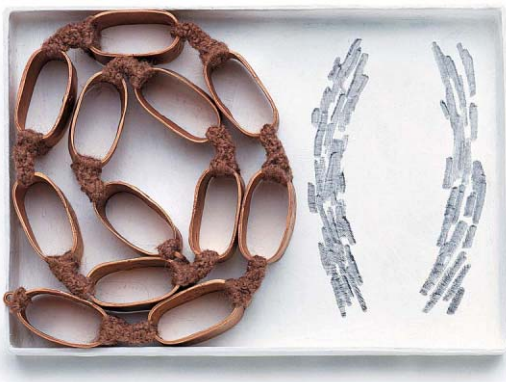
Variations on Silence:



The Jewelry of Iris Bodemer

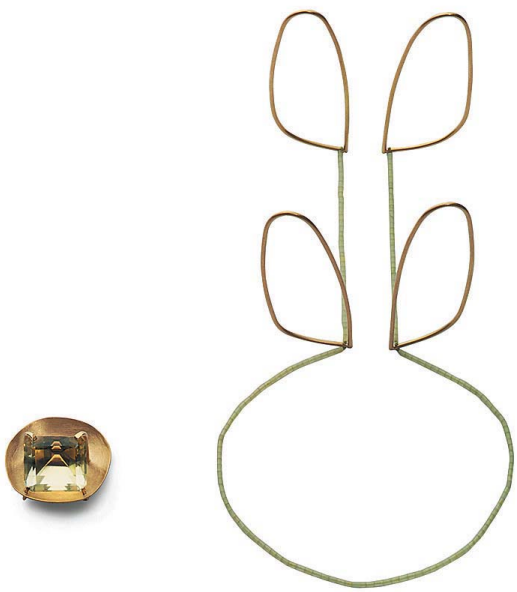
BY MARJORIE SIMON

Neckpiece, 2000
silver, aquamarine, pebble
17 x 9 ⅞ x 1"



Neckpiece, 2002
18k gold, citrine, pearls, tourmaline, rose quartz, tiger´s eye, pyrite, coral
7 ½ x 4 ¾ x 3 ⅛"

Necklace, 2004
bronze, wool
4 ⅜ x 6 ¼ x ¾"



Necklace, 2002
18k gold, lemon citrine, serpentine

IN HER RECENT exhibition at Washington DC's Jewelers' Werk Galerie, German-born jeweler Iris Bodemer returned to metal in all its assertive materiality. As always, Bodemer's asymmetrical compositions claimed their space on the wall, the table, or the body. Where she once brought in color from gemstones, found objects, and textiles such as wool and raffia, now her palette is mostly darkened silver leavened here and there with stark white, bronze, gray and the transparency of smoky topaz. In some of these pieces, gigantic pearls, rutilated quartz, and citrines balance the white of cast silver. In others, translucent pastel gemstones of pink and blue contrast with the milky opaque metal. Raw and dimensional, the many polished and cut stones dance a dialectic of the random and designed.

The consistency of Bodemer's forms and their relationship to each other makes the entire body of work cohere without seeming repetitious. The new neckpieces, clearly 21st century in their rough juxtaposition of seemingly dissimilar materials, such as faceted gemstones and rough copper, also reference classical jewelry forms, with a large central pendant and "chain." A few pieces recall Bodemer's earlier multimedia compositions. Eccentric circles and potato-shaped silhouettes appear to have been cut freehand out of metal in the manner of Matisse's famed cutouts, as if one person were holding the paper and another manipulating the scissors. The resultant irregularity imparts a tenderness that lightens the physical weight and visual mass of these pieces.

Capable of creating sophisticated clasps, trained goldsmith Bodemer favors simple ones instead, constructing giant staples to attach disparate elements. The reverse side often appears to be stitched, perhaps a throwback to Bodemer's earlier textile assemblages. Bodemer's work has always been gestural and intuitive, and this quality has not changed. She continues to use line effectively, animating even heavy wires to look as if they were drawn by a very young giant with an enormous pencil. "I always make my jewelry like I'm drawing," she says. Likewise, Bodemer's drawings engage us with their immediacy and combination of materials, textural variety, and repetition of forms.

An intellectual polymath, Bodemer draws inspiration from multiple sources. While her jewelry aesthetic seems clearly European it doesn't follow any single school of expression. She in fact is more engaged with fine art, particularly the drawings of Joseph Beuys, and artists as diverse as Leonardo da Vinci, Marcel Duchamp, and Louise Bourgeois. Of prime significance to her are the work and words of American avant-garde artist and composer John Cage. Bodemer uses space vis-à-vis form the way Cage uses silence as an equivalent to music. As seen in her 2002 catalogue, simply titled *Iris Bodemer,* her jewelry is often spare, with elements inhabiting a kind of silent space. Among the lessons Bodemer learned from Cage is a principle that craft artists know well: the process is more important than the product. "The interpreter [read "student"] has to find his own way, trusting his intuition." Bodemer says Cage taught her to "explore the power of material, to carefully look at little things, and that inspiration is

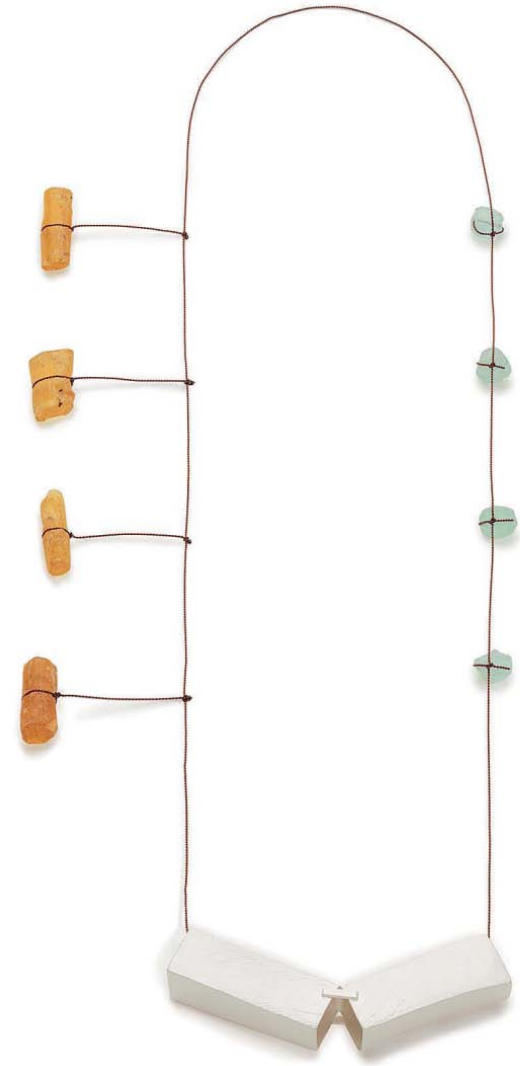
Bodemer uses space vis-à-vis form the way John Cage uses silence as an equivalent to music.

everywhere and first of all inside myself."[1]

Part of the power of Bodemer's work comes from what she chooses to put together, and part from what she decides to hold back. But when probed about her work, she deflects questions about meaning and materials, saying she selects whatever expresses her ideas, without elaborating on what those ideas are. Such an attitude embodies the notion expressed by fellow German jewelry artist Iris Eichenberg, that "Europeans are not good at talking about their work.... [They believe] it speaks without explaining itself."[2] Asked about this statement, Bodemer agrees, laughing, that everything she wants to say is in the work. Cornelie Holzach, Director of the Schmuckmuseum in Pforzheim, expands on this notion: "What matters when creating structures, surfaces, colors, lines and volumes is not the technical suitability of the material but rather that the chosen material comes as close to the idea as possible."[3] Bodemer believes that talking about even completed work disturbs the artistic process, the "magic," a sentiment shared by a wide range of artists, including composers and novelists. Besides, she says she can't always explain the work's meaning beyond stating it's about everyday life, about the way the sun came in the window, about something she was thinking. Clearly, in her view, art and life are not binary; everything is art and everything is life.

Images come from everywhere. She might be reading poetry or philosophy, or a Chekhov play, or even studying Zen gardens. Bodemer is also interested in cognition theories about how the brain works, and in physics, specifically the nature of potential, versus kinetic, energy. Speaking metaphorically, as she often does, she muses on potentiality, imagining that "all the lines are already in the pen.... maybe it is better to leave them [there] as a pure option? The challenge is how to translate this idea into the material world." Bodemer refers to creative work as a filtering process "Every day we pour stories and pictures through a filter," she says, paraphrasing Chekov. "What stays in the filter is what we have" to work with. Thought of in these terms, the jewelry seems a bit less mystifying to a viewer, more accessible, perhaps, and more rewarding.

Despite a reluctance to explain her work, Bodemer speaks more freely about her creative process. She still circles around the subject, asking her audience to follow her train of thought. "It just has to express the idea, and the idea is visualized by the work; otherwise I would write books."[4] This statement accompanies ten pages of her multi-media work in a recent survey of contemporary jewelry. Made in the early 2000s, the jewelry contains some of the most vivid examples of Bodemer's creation, in which she mixes gemstones, fabric, and textile techniques with primitive-looking metalwork. Asked about materials during her "textile period," she again quotes Cage: "Someone once asked Debussy how he wrote music, and he replied, 'I take all the tones there are, leave out the ones I don't want and use all the others.'"



Neckpiece, 2000
silver, aquamarine, copal
4 ⅜ x 12 ½ x 1 ⅛"

Bodemer's seemingly opaque responses to questions about her creative practice may simply reflect the considerable amount of time spent in bringing her work to fruition. After completing a body of work, and then exhibiting it, she takes off much of the following year to get her mind clear for the next project. For six to eight months she will empty her mind of expectation, and remain open to whatever wanders by, "concentrating on the inner dialogue between me and the world." In that state of flow and receptivity, images and ideas come unbidden and somehow everything she has seen, heard, or experienced finds its way into the work. She admits to a very clear vision of what she's making, planning out all possible variations before construction begins. The images are there; there's no searching for them; they come to her. By the time Bodemer begins fabricating she doesn't hesitate; everything springs to life in her hands. Still, each piece manages to appear completely spontaneous.

Neckpiece, 2004
18k gold, quartz, pearls, plastic, tape
11 ¾ x 15 ¾ x ⅜"

Rings, 2004
wool, metal

An oft-told story of a ring that came down to Bodemer through her great grandmother's estate sheds light on such a creative process. Too large for the woman's hand, the ring presumably had belonged to her late husband. Desiring to wear it, the widow had wrapped woolen thread around the ring to size it down. This simple and resourceful solution, combined with the unlikely contrast of materials, inspired Bodemer to explore the use of wool, a material she had never really liked, in her own work. She came to appreciate it for the flexibility, strength, and warmth it provided. When the metaphorical qualities of wool ceased to interest her, she stopped using this material.

Bodemer enjoyed a "happy childhood" in Paderborn, an ancient city in Westphalia, Germany, whose cathedral dates to the time of Charlemagne. She played in the river that ran through the town, and enjoyed the security of growing up in a small city. She also benefited from a supportive family and the rigor of an all-girls' convent school, which she credits with building her confidence early on. From ages nine to fifteen she was further empowered through participation in co-ed scouting activities: As she learned to build fires, explore nature, gain knowledge of the woods, she began to discover her own solutions to real-life situations. She played piano and guitar, and by age thirteen she was already making and selling jewelry. Family friends, who owned a drugstore in town, allowed Bodemer to set up a jewelry table out front, and with her earnings she bought materials.

Bodemer's first teacher at Goldsmith School (Berufskolleg fuer Formgebung) in Pforzheim was Winfried Krueger, whose hands-off style had a deeply formative influence on the young student. Krueger taught that there is no "good" or "bad"; as an artist it is one's own decisions that matter. Serious and ready to learn, Bodemer began to develop her aesthetic. Her final project, titled "Metamorphosis," demonstrated the evolution of a simple silver square into nearly a dozen complex, volumetric rings. Although eventual explorations took her to diverse materials, such as felt and wool, Bodemer's early work was in metal, specifically, sawing, bending, and fabricating from a flat sheet.

Bodemer went on to attend the College of Design (Hochschule fuer Gestaltung) in Pforzheim, a school that supports creative and technical skills equally, with no separation between design and production. Students are further taught to view art and life as a seamless continuum, with a curriculum that encourages exploration of broad-ranging themes. The school also facilitated a "constant exchange of ideas with the training centers in Hanau, Heiligendamm, Dusseldorf, Barcelona, and Prague," as the school's catalogue states.[5] During Bodemer's time there, a grant enabled her to

Brooch, 2006
rhodonite, pearls, wool
3 ⅛ x 1 ¾ x ¾"

travel to the United States and spend 1995 at Rhode Island School of Design.

At RISD, liberated from her usual tradition-bound environment, Bodemer found herself exploring not only new materials, but new ideas as well. Being by the sea, seeing American students picking up bits of colored plastic and using found objects in their work, she began to do likewise, combining metal with plastic, adhesive tape, and other non-traditional materials. In Providence, she found all kinds of colorful plastic cords, which she brought back to Germany and folded into her studio practice; enamel was no longer the only option for adding color to her work.

Bodemer completed her degree and spent the following two years in Amsterdam at the Sandberg Institute, in the department of free design. Like many of the jewelry students in both Amsterdam and Pforzheim at the time, Bodemer continued to explore "alternative" materials, or at least materials that were outside the traditional choices for conventional jewelry. It is ironic that in the intervening decades this then radical departure has become conventional in and of itself, and by returning to metal, Bodemer has once again demonstrated her independent streak.

Bodemer's early work showed itself to be confident and accessible metal objects. As well, Bodemer exploited the properties of metal—its ability to hold its shape, the tension inherent in a woven vessel, and use of line on a metal surface—to great effect. Early acceptance by Galerie Marzee in Nijmegen, the Netherlands, resulted in biennial exhibitions that continue to the present time. The catalogue that Bodemer designed for her 2002 show there is a whisper of restraint, with unique hand-sewn covers and an index simply

Neckpiece (open and closed), 2012
silver
10 ¼ x 12 ¼ x ⅜"

Neckpiece, 2012
silver, rose quartz, binding wire
7 x 11 x 1 ½"

To track Bodemer's work through the past decade is to visit the major thematic concerns of contemporary jewelers for the years ahead.

stapled inside. Photos of the objects, many made of gold, rough gems, and thread, are presented singly on each beautifully designed page. The work is revealed at its most gestural and refined. Animated line drawings recall those of German jeweler Manfred Bischoff, drawn from a perspective high above the page. Bodemer's skilled goldsmithing is evident in the pillowy gold and silver elements, and her unerring sense of design marries them with slim threads or tiny strung beads. Work of this time shows characteristic Bodemer touches: raw crystals as well as cut gemstones, ingenious yet simple attachments, and subtle color combinations. A decade later, the work remains fresh.

To track Bodemer's work through the past decade is to visit the major thematic concerns of contemporary jewelers for the years ahead. Her cut-out-with-scissors look has been adopted by students everywhere for its animated, seemingly spontaneous irregular lines. The energetic silhouettes convey the kinetic energy of their creation; not the caress of a paintbrush, but the violent rending of paper by scissors.

A series of Marzee exhibitions reflect Bodemer's concerns over time. In 2004, she explored jewelry as an independent sculptural entity separate from the body. The work is colorful, constructed from a variety of materials, including wool and plastic, and not necessarily wearable. In no way can it be considered supportive of, or secondary to, fashion. In 2006, brooches placed on wood-mounted drawings occupied an entire wall of the gallery. When not being worn, brooch and drawing comprise a unified composition. In 2008, Bodemer investigated the ways in which materials speak to, or fight with, each other. This work contained a mix of organic and inorganic materials with wrapped, sewn, and stapled textiles—from linen and hemp to Kevlar. While just hinting at being over-determined, the material combinations remain discordant.

Eventually, Bodemer became bored with non-metal, and realized she had nothing more to say with that vocabulary. With her recent return to metal, she appears, without repeating herself, to be reinterpreting some of her earlier designs. For example, the silver neckpieces of 2012 resemble a horsehair brooch of 2008, with the chalky white metal replacing the knotted and bound horsehair. Both are in the same color family and contrast a frosty flotsam with pale rough tourmalines.

Some of Bodemer's jewelry is lovely and heartbreakingly tender, some ungainly with awkward juxtapositions. Bodemer echoes the best of her German and Dutch predecessors, partaking of Hermann Junger's flawless craftsmanship and seeming nonchalance with precious materials, along with Dorothea Pruehl's embrace of chunky, "ugly" combinations of the non-precious. She anticipated the current generation of makers, such as Deborah Rudolph in Germany, and countless students around the world, who are following her lead in pairing rough, torn-paper silhouettes with textiles and scumbled surfaces.

Bodemer's work demands thought but, more importantly, it *invites* thought. To understand it fully, read some poetry. Or write some. Listen to John Cage, who said there's no such thing as absolute silence. Except the sounds of your heart beating and your blood rushing around your brain.

Neckpiece, 2012
bronze, silver, black jade, Andean opal, mounting adhesive
5 ½ x 13 x ¾"

Marjorie Simon is a jeweler and writer residing in Philadelphia.

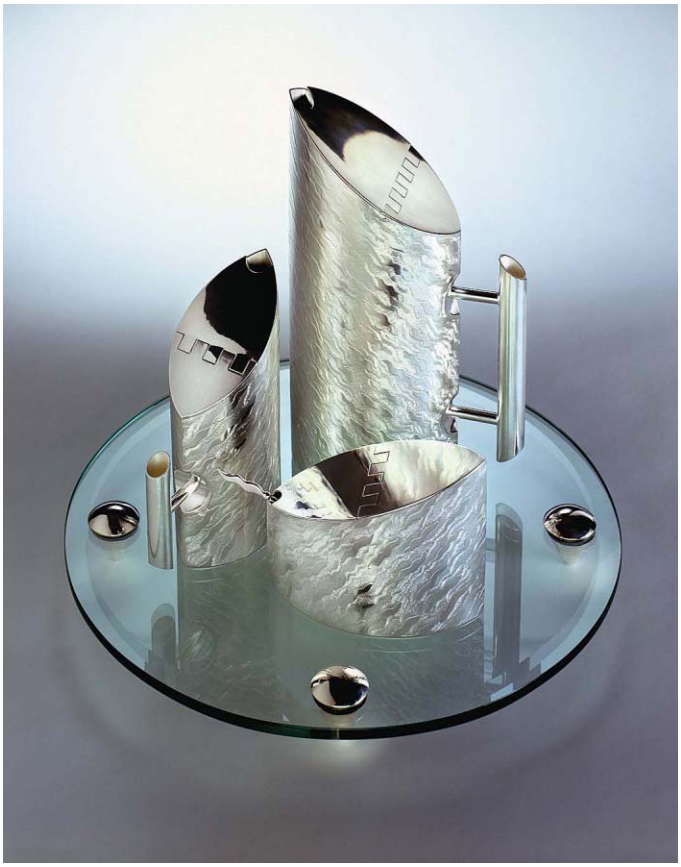
1. The connection to John Cage was noted by Judy Wagonfield in a review in *Metalsmith*, vol. 27, no. 5, p.58.
2. www.artjewelryforum.org/ionterviews
3. www.irisbodemer.de/E/text
4. *Contemporary Jewelry Art*, by Design-Ma-Ma, Cypi Press, 2011, UK. p. 30.
5. English translation of preface to *Schmucktriebe*, catalogue of Pforzheim school, ca. 2000, by Christianne Weber-Stoller, Society for Goldsmiths' Art.

Furthermore:
www.irisbodemer.com
www.marzee.nl

Kevin O'Dwyer: Metal In and Out of Time

BY JOHN K. GRANDE

Boxes, from "Landscape Series, 2008-2012
silver
height 3-5"



Architectural Coffee Service, 1996
sterling silver, glass
coffee pot height 14"
tray diam. 16"
Collection of King Carl Gustas, Sweden
Photo: Robert Walker

All art is a memory of our dark origin whose fragments live in the artist forever. —Paul Klee

ECLECTIC AND PLAYFUL, the highly original metalwork of Irish artist Kevin O'Dwyer engages in a dialogue with history. O'Dwyer's 30-year involvement with the medium of metal renews the eternal qualities of early Irish art. O'Dwyer integrates the traditional metalwork of his ancestors with a modernist aesthetic, and achieves a remarkable crossover between the ancient and the contemporary.

O'Dwyer's innovative integrations of form with function often recall modernist architecture. Whether a collection of salt and pepper shakers based on the skyline of Chicago, or an architectonic teapot, O'Dwyer raises the perceptual bar on what metal can do. With Frank Lloyd Wright, Memphis Design, and Art Deco among his influences, he produces an art that is as structural as it is organic, both solid and fanciful, sprinkled with imagination and a dash of hard-edge design. While the context is always contemporary, O'Dwyer is respectful and cognizant of Early Irish and Hiberno-Norse influences; an awareness that stems from his youth divided between the monastic ruins of Cashel, County Tipperary and the skyscrapers of Manhattan.

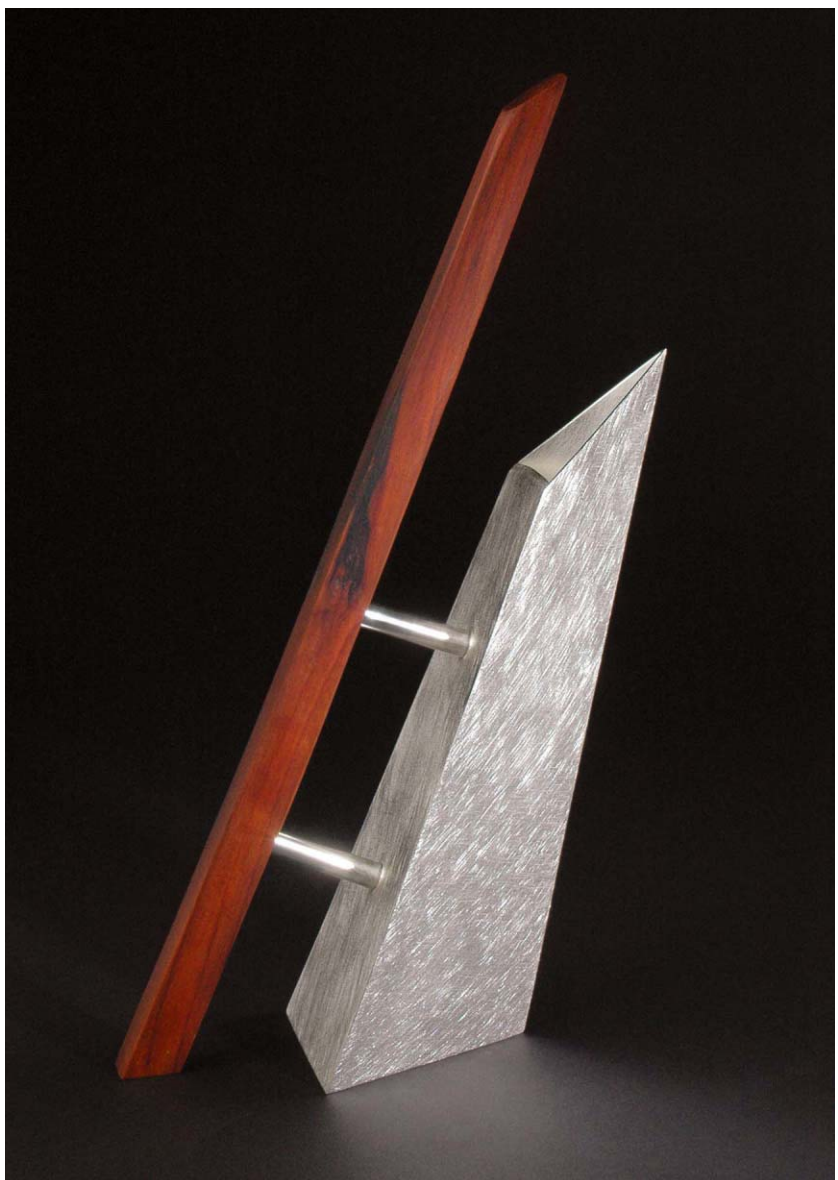
O'Dwyer arrived in Chicago in 1977 as a professional biochemist. With a keen interest in metalworking, he began evening studies with Harriet Driessigger. Metalsmithing soon became an obsession, and he left his "day job" to pursue it full time. While studying at the Art Institute of Chicago, he was fortunate to meet master silversmith William Frederick (1922-2012) and apprenticed with him from 1979 to 1982. Frederick had studied with Daniel Pederson of the Kalo Company in Chicago. The Kalo silversmiths had emigrated from Scandinavia to America in 1901 and, working with Clara Welles, established the Kalo Shop that specialized in Arts and Crafts-period silverware. O'Dwyer was Frederick's last apprentice and he continues in the master's tradition of making hand wrought silver for exhibition and on commission.

After his apprenticeship, O'Dwyer moved to Savannah, Georgia, as an artist-in-education for the State of Georgia. He established his studio on Barnard Street and continued developing his artwork and exhibiting throughout the Southeast. Atlanta's High Museum of Art purchased a series of ebony and sterling silver "crab pickers" in 1984 for their collection, followed by Arts Council purchases for the State Building and the University of Georgia. During his residency in Savannah, O'Dwyer had the opportunity to study with Heikki Seppa, a Finnish metalsmith who taught him anticlastic raising and reticulation, which he has incorporated into his "Landscape Series" of boxes. These pieces, with their varied topographies, are a marriage of art and nature, and also employ those techniques developed at the Fabergé studios of Czarist Russia. The cuts in the box surface are like scores in the land, fragments of topography in miniature. The "Landscape Series" plays with functionality and ornament, and brings that design language into a dialogue with today's interest in sustainability and ecology.

O'Dwyer integrates the traditional metalwork of his ancestors with a modernist aesthetic, and achieves a remarkable crossover between the ancient and the contemporary.

In 1986 O'Dwyer returned to Ireland to set-up a studio in Dublin, and has since relocated to the Midlands of Ireland along the Silver River. O'Dwyer's return to Ireland rekindled his interest in archaeology and he began to explore the interrelationships between artifacts and architecture in a contemporary manner. An angular and cylindrical coffee service completed in 2010 combines the influences of modernist architecture with textural patterns inspired by Japanese kimono fabric and carved wooden handles made of 4,000-year-old bog yew mined from the peat fields near his workshop. The coffee service floats on a glass and silver tray, and the set now resides at a client's retreat in Switzerland.

Similarly, a hard-edged vessel from the "Architectural Series" juxtaposes a geometric slab of sterling silver with a millennia-old bogwood handle, embodying a design aesthetic that merges primal and urban elements. It is the personification of a design that engages in a dialogue with nature's context and forms. O'Dwyer's teapot with a gold spiral handle recalls the ancient Neolithic spiral forms



Vessel, 1999
sterling silver, 24k gold plated sterling silver handle
18 x 12 x 5"
Photo: Michael McKeown

Rocking Teapot, 1999
sterling silver
10 x 10 x 5"
Celestial Seasonings Teapot Collection

Vessel, 2009
sterling silver, ancient bog Yew handle
(carbon dated 4,000 years old)
14 x 8 x 4"

Teapot on the Crest of Wave, 2003
sterling silver, bronze sheet, 24k gold plated sterling silver handle
24 x 26 x 6"
Collection of Racine Art Museum

Sea Pod from "Below Sea Level" series, 2010
bronze, sterling silver
14 x 11 x 6"

common to many cultures, and found in the stone carvings of Newgrange and Loughcrew.

O'Dwyer's *Rocking Teapot* —which won the Celestial Seasonings teapot competition "Inspired by Tea, A Loose Interpretation IV" in 1999—teeters like a hobbyhorse, and has intricate surface patterns that recall ancient Irish stone carvings. "The combination of patterned and polished surfaces in my work creates a sense of drama and contrast," O'Dwyer states. Such patterns and textures "are inspired by Irish artifacts, a 1950's obsession with pattern, Japanese textiles, and references to my science background. Textures are applied using hammers, heat, roller printing and photo-etching." The playful composition of *Rocking Teapot,* which includes a swirl of silver that nearly envelops the central teapot, proves that design can be as practical as it is fanciful.

The sense of balance and movement within O'Dwyer's pieces is achieved through his use of tapered and flowing spicula forms. *Teapot on the Crest of a Wave*, in the collection of the Racine Art Museum, combines contemporary and traditional metalsmithing techniques to create a dynamic image of a teapot "hanging ten" on a golden wave. Michele Bufano, Director of Seattle's Chihuly Glass Museum, describes O'Dwyer's work as "a frozen dervish dance that embraces the air and makes the negative form part of the piece." A series of vessels titled *Below Sea Level* (2009-2012), made of hand-blown glass and hand-forged sterling silver, conjure the imagery of jellyfish and sea creatures. One of this series was recently purchased by The National Museum of Ireland.

Landscape has been a strong influence in O'Dwyer's work and his move to the Midlands inspired an interest in the industrial history of the peat bogs, which surround his workshop. In 2002 he initiated a sculpture symposium in the peatlands that led to the establishment of Sculpture in the Parklands. Until recently, O'Dwyer served as director of Sculpture in the Parklands, commissioning world-renowned sculptors to respond to the industrial and environmental heritage of the Lough Boora harvested peatlands. O'Dwyer's own sculptures produced for that site include *Tippler Bridge*, which alludes to the region's industrial past. The tippler, once used to unload peat at Ferbane Power Station, floats over a manmade canal and combines functionality with sculptural form in a bridge and viewing point for visitors exploring this unencumbered landscape. O'Dwyer's sculpture *60 Degrees* offsets the natural lighting of this textured landscape with a series of three triangular forms, like Neolithic standing stones. While the two outer forms are made from disused bog railway sleepers from the 1950s, the central one is of stainless-steel plate, and together they references the waning industry and rebirth of the landscape as a sculpture park.

The sense of balance and movement within O'Dwyer's pieces is achieved through his use of tapered and flowing spicula forms.

Enigmatic, hard-edged, eclectic, O'Dwyer's sculptures parallel his more refined and internationally recognized silver and gold metal designs. A sculpture made for the Science Museum at Trinity College, Dublin, for example, ingeniously plays with the surrounding architecture and environment,

Sea Pod from "Below Sea Level" series, 2012
glass, sterling silver
14 x 24 x 8"
COLLECTION OF NATIONAL MUSEUM OF IRELAND

Tippler Bridge, 2009
Installed at Sculpture in the Parklands, Ireland
recycled steel from Ferbane Power Plant, galvanized steel, stainless steel
12 x 30 x 12'

Goldsculpt , 2011
Couture shoes in collaboration with fashion designer Andreia Chaves, shown at Paris and Milan Fashion Week 2011/2012
leather, 24k gold-plated bronze sheet
8 x 9 x 4"
PHOTO: ANDREW BRADLEY

and though the scale is vastly different, it still resembles his angular silverworks.

O'Dwyer's longstanding interest in archaeology led to a collaboration with archaeologist Caimin O'Brien in the publication of *Stories from a Sacred Landscape*, which explores the monastic heritage of the Irish midlands from the 6th to 12th centuries. In 2010 O'Dwyer was artist-in-residence at the World Archaeology Conference in Dublin, engaging with international experts on a range of topics. Further interest in Irish metalwork has led to his research and photo-documentation of Saint Manchan's Shrine. O'Dwyer's study traces the Shrine's links to 8th and 9th century Irish metalwork, the cross-cultural exchange between the Irish and Norse communities leading to the development of a unique Hiberno-Urnes style, and the ultimate demise of the Irish Christian art style during the 12th century.

O'Dwyer has represented Ireland in over 40 international exhibitions, and continues to make exhibition pieces and commissions for clients worldwide. Recent collaborations with Brazilian fashion designer Andreia Chaves has produced a series of gold-plated shoes, titled "Goldsculpt," that were featured in couture runway shows. "The collaborative process pushes you in directions never imagined," O'Dwyer affirms. "If you told me I would be making shoes for the fashion runways of Paris and Milan two years ago I would have said you were crazy!"

This is the gift that Kevin O'Dwyer gives us. As an interpreter and innovator, he enhances the ancient language of metalsmithing by taking it to new places informed by the times we live in.

Writer John K. Grande is co-curator of "Eco-Art" with Peter Selz and Pia Hovi-Assad at the Pori Art Museum, Finland (2011) and curator of "Earth Art 2012" at Van Dusens Gardens in Vancouver, B.C.

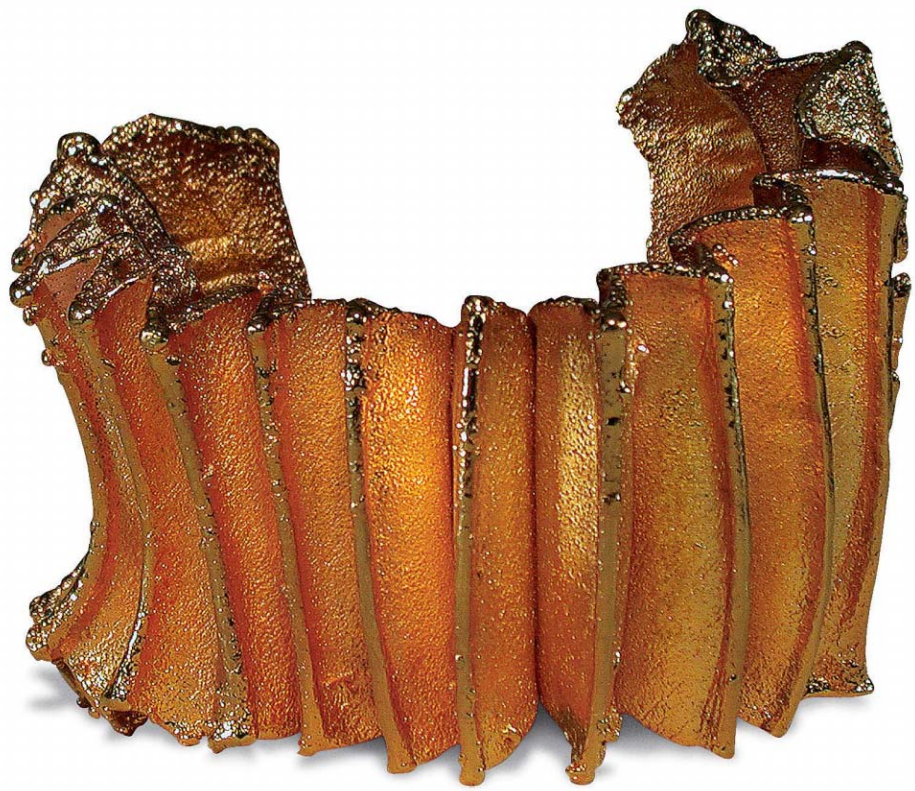
Furthermore:
www.millennium2000silver.com

60 Degrees, 2002
Sculpture installation at Sculpture in the Parklands (Ireland)
stainless steel, oak railway sleepers, recycled railway track, steel
16 ½ x 16 ½ x 35'
PHOTO: JAMES FRAHER

Na Fáná Fuachtmhar - The Cold Hills, 2009
sculpture installed at University College Dublin
16 ½ x 15 x 4'

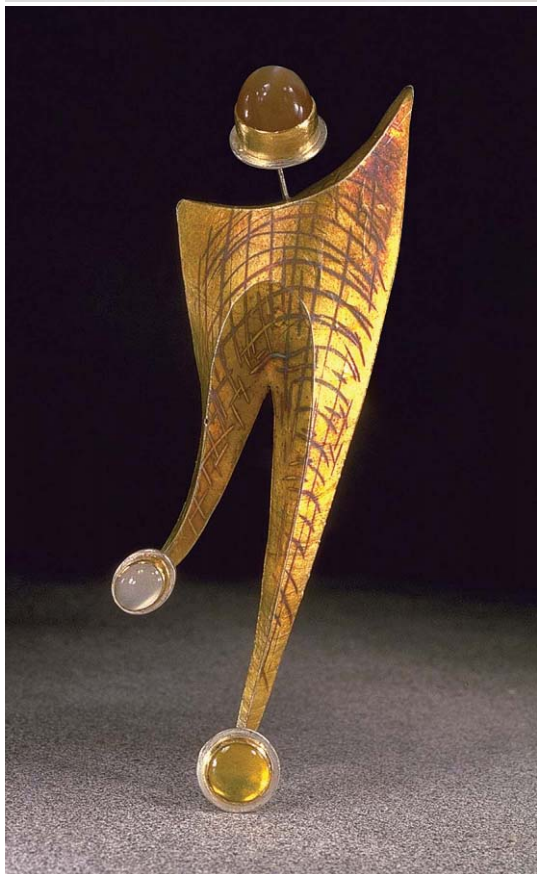
Nature and Structure:
The Balancing Act of Charles Lewton-Brain

BY BARBARA ISHERWOOD



Pleated Bracelet, 2011
copper, foldformed, electroformed copper
4 x 3 ⅛"

"Cage" series (ring), 2010
Alberta river pebble, stainless steel fusion welded wire, electroformed copper, 24k electroformed gold
height 2"



Prairie (brooch), 1997
sterling silver, 18k gold doublee, steel
3 ½ x 1 ¾ x 2"

Dancing Pin, 1987
18k gold doublee, sterling, 24k gold
moonstone, citrine
height 4 ¾"

MAKER, MENTOR, INVENTOR, author and more, Calgary-based jeweler and goldsmith Charles Lewton-Brain was recently accorded the Canadian craft world's highest honor. In 2011, he was named the recipient of the Saidye Bronfman Award. Presented under the banner of the Governor General's Awards in Visual and Media Arts, this distinction is presented annually to an artist who has made both a substantial contribution to the development of fine crafts in Canada and an outstanding body of creative work. The Canada Council for the Arts, which administers the award, summarizes Lewton-Brain's work and achievements:

> "Patinas marked by chemical scars, metals grown like coral on copper grids, folds formed organically in sheet metal... An artwork by Charles Lewton-Brain offers you a fascinating journey along the tracks of his process, and reveals the natural beauty that metals take on when pushed to their limits. And just as the artist-goldsmith's creations lay bare his process, so does his work outside of the studio. Throughout his 40-year career, Lewton-Brain has generously forged pathways for the fine craft community and metal industry—as the inventor of the widely-used "foldforming" technique, as a dedicated instructor and writer on techniques and research, and as an advocate for his field at the national and international level."[1]

The artist's penchant for exploring untrodden ground echoes his early international experiences. Born in England, his childhood was spent in Tanzania, where his father worked for the British Colonial Service and his mother was a nurse. Lewton-Brain, who is a great storyteller, recounts a memorable moment from his youth: "One day my brother and I were arguing in the car. My father said, 'Stop arguing or I'll put you out.' We were in lion country, about eight kilometers from home. A little while later, my brother and I were trudging along the road, looking nervously into the bush. I don't think we ever argued again."[2]

By the time the Lewton-Brain family moved to upstate New York in the late 1960s, young Charles was equipped with experiences quite unlike those of the typical North American kid. Lewton-Brain's artistic inclinations were already apparent by then. He liked to draw, especially in pen and ink, a medium demanding both spontaneity and confidence. By his mid-teens he was creating ads for a community newspaper. He envisioned a career in graphic arts, but had a foretaste of his eventual destiny during a visit to Taos, New Mexico, where his girlfriend's hippy mother sold old Native American jewelry out of the back of a van. His interest piqued, he visited the legendary Sonny Spruce Indian Shop in Taos Pueblo, where the proprietor showed him how to grind turquoise by hand.

This initial exposure led him to take a jewelry course during his first year at NSCAD (Nova Scotia College of Art and Design) in Halifax, where he enrolled in 1974. Under the direction of president Garry Neill Kennedy, NSCAD was a

hotbed of conceptual art, hosting renowned visiting artists such as Joseph Beuys and Vito Acconci. Lewton-Brain recalls some of the unorthodox exercises the students did, such as having to make art out of a roll of brown paper, or being sequestered in a room for eight hours with sacks of plaster and a pillar topped with a bunch of bananas!

While Lewton-Brain enjoyed such conceptual experimentation, the tactility of jewelry-making was more compelling, and he began his career-long exploration of metalsmithing techniques that incorporate the qualities of drawing. "I'm interested in making pictures," says the artist,[3] who often adopts what he describes as "a 'printmaking' approach to working metal,[4]" building his pieces in layers, each requiring sets of committed decisions. At NSCAD he became adept at chasing, a technique that remains a favorite in his repertoire. He expanded his skill set through various jobs in the jewelry trade. "I consider myself to have very solid feet in the world of industry, and in the art jewelry world,[5]" says the artist, who has at times supported himself and his family as a diamond setter, model-maker and freelance goldsmith.

Brooch, 1990
14k gold, copper, sterling silver
3 ⅛ x 1 ⅜ x ⅝"

By the end of his final year at NSCAD Lewton-Brain was already sufficiently skilled to teach a summer course on chasing and electroforming. The pedagogical gene runs in the family— both parents taught. It was through one of his father's teaching gigs that Lewton-Brain had a key formative experience—his father was lecturing as part of the SS University's Semester at Sea, and suggested his son come along. The ship's four-month journey included points in the South Pacific, Southeast Asia and Africa. In each place they stopped, the young artist would take his chasing tools and a few pieces, and introduce himself to the local jeweler or metalsmith. He found people very open to sharing what they knew, and seeing how they operated was a real eye-opener. He recalls visiting a blacksmith in Bali: "He had a sledge hammer set into the ground as an anvil, perhaps two or three hammers, one or two chisels set into bamboo holders, and the fire was coconut charcoal, about six inches across, and on this he was making the most beautiful, incredible box joint pliers out of scrap steel... I learned blacksmithing in the West, where it's all about how many tongs you have. At 21, that was a revelation, that it's not about the tools."[6]

Inspired to continue learning, Lewton-Brain took the advice of NSCAD faculty member, Norwegian goldsmith Christian Gaudernack, and went to Pforzheim, Germany, to

Foldformed Sculpture, 1997
copper
height 23 5/8"

enroll in Hochschule für Gestaltung, the renowned school that counts Charon Kransen, Harold O'Connor, Alan Revere and Abrasha among its alumni. But when he got there, he found that the entrance requirements had changed and all students were now expected to be fluent in German to be accepted into the metals program. Undeterred by the prospect of learning a new language in six weeks, Lewton-Brain bought a Berlitz course and began cramming, supporting himself through part-time work as a goldsmith. During the entrance interview, he said "yes" or "no" to every question, managing to convince his examiners that he spoke fluent German.[7]

One answer he gave during that interview turned out to be a fortuitous mistake. Without realizing it he said "yes" to studying with Klaus Ullrich, not his original choice of instructor. But it was as a student of Ullrich's that fold-forming, Lewton-Brain's most celebrated achievement, was born. Ullrich was among a number of postwar metalsmiths who believed that so-called "accidents" such as reticulation and fusion could be controlled and used for compositional effect. This had been revolutionary within the European jewelry world in the 1950s, when traces of process were to be eradicated, not celebrated.[8]

Ullrich encouraged his students to play with the metal, discover its natural characteristics, and allow these to direct its forming. "He would take a piece of rod—steel, silver or brass—and bend it, and get a particular bend that is perfect. So this concept that you could let the material's expression do the work, and that you didn't actually have to touch that spot to make it happen, was the starting point for me to understand what Ullrich was after."[9] By heeding Ullrich's urging to use the material's process marks as conscious design choices, the technique of fold-forming emerged.[10] Lewton-Brain describes its essence: "You work with sheet metal. It is folded, then while it is folded, it is forged or rolled or worked. Then it is annealed then unfolded."[11] Forms are developed quickly using simple tools—hammer and anvil, and rolling mill if desired.

Green Bowl, 2012
copper, foldformed, patinated
height 5 ½"

Foldformed Rueger, 2008
sterling silver
length 5 ⅞"

Remarkably, until Lewton-Brain developed fold-forming in the 1980s, it had never been done before, a fact confirmed by the British Museum Research Lab.[12] Goldsmith Alan Revere stated that outside of the Industrial Revolution, fold-forming represents the first major innovation in metal-working in thousands of years.[13] Speculating as to why the technique had not been previously developed, Lewton-Brain suggests that until the advent of modern manufacturing methods, sheet metal was just too expensive to mess around with.[14] Since discovering fold-forming, he has continued to research its potential, making it the subject of his MFA thesis at SUNY New Paltz in 1986. As many as 100 different forms have been developed by the artist and others who've taken up the practice.

Lewton-Brain explains the technique's appeal. "I believe as humans, we see nature and natural forms as beauty. In fold-forming we are working close to the limits of the material—when you push the material, the laws of nature show up," he says.[15] "If it looks like a ram's horn, or flower, it's because that's exactly what's happening in nature."[16] Resembling stars, flowers, shells, leaves, snakes, horns, birds or geological formations, many of the fold-forms are sufficiently beautiful to stand on their own. A copper sculpture of forged pleated metal has the sweeping elegance of a pair of swans' necks. The *Tennessee Fold Form*, forged from a single sheet of silver, appears ready to wriggle away. The rippling undulations of this helical-shaped piece shimmer with reflected light, amplifying its animated appearance.

Fold-forms may also be joined to other forms or used with mixed techniques. In *Dancing Pin*, scored and bent fold-forms

Tracks (bracelet), 2005
stainless steel, electroformed copper,
garnets, pearl, electroformed 24 karat gold
4 x 3 ⅜ x 1 ¼"

"Cage" series (neckpiece), 2008
stainless steel, electroformed copper,
electroformed 24k gold

are augmented with doublée (fused gold on silver) and gemstones, creating a stylized figure alive with movement, a fitting symbol of the artist's energetic approach to life and art.

Lewton-Brain estimates he's taught fold-forming to several thousand people, through international workshops and teaching in his role as Head of Metals and Jewellery at Alberta College of Art and Design, an institution he has been with since 1986. He also hosts the annual Charles Lewton-Brain Conference, held at the Center for Metal Arts in Florida, New York, where participants get hands-on experience creating forms, and also customizing tools. For those who can't get to a workshop in person, there is a wealth of other resources, including his book, *Foldforming*, edited by Tim McCreight and Abby Johnston, a Powerpoint presentation, a CDR, video, and links to articles, all available through the artist's website.

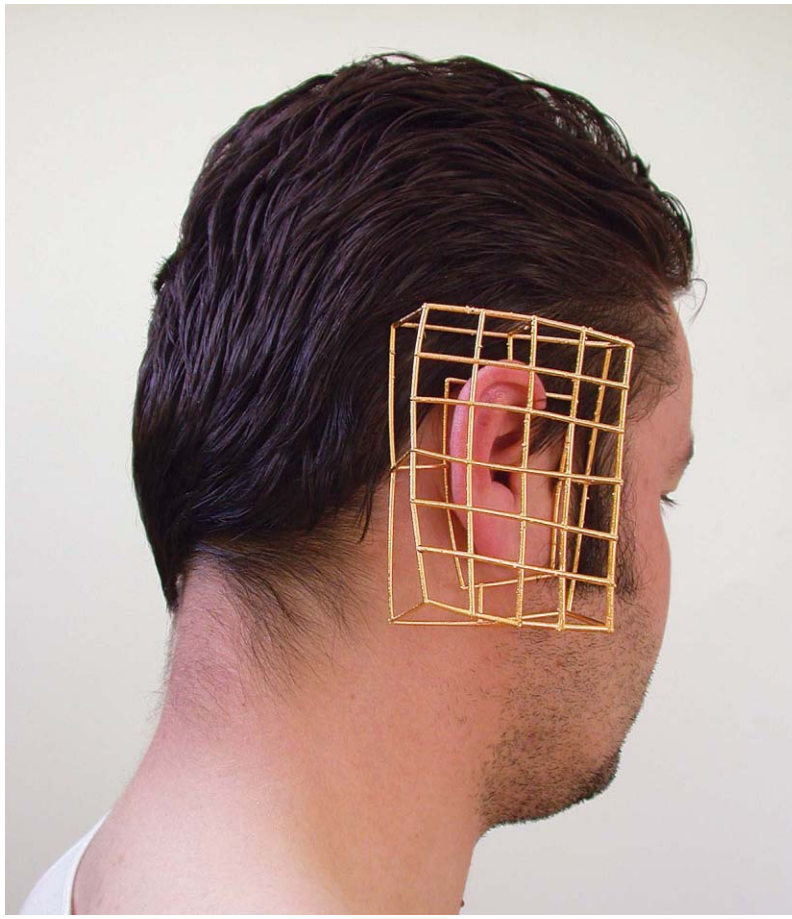
An early player on the information highway, Lewton-Brain has been active on the Internet since the mid-1990s, when he partnered with Dr. Hanuman Aspler from Bangkok to form the Ganoksin Project, which is now the largest source on the Internet for jewelry-related information. This massive site, which attracts over four million unique visitors a year, has more than 600,000 pages of information, including 700 by Lewton-Brain himself.[17] Those cover a startlingly wide array of topics — workbench safety, repairs, hinges, photography of jewelry, PR Tools, patination — the list goes on.

Some articles are excerpts from books the artist has authored, including his landmark publication, *The Jeweler's Bench Book*, produced in collaboration with the Manufacturing Jewelers & Suppliers of America and The Ganoksin Project. But much is original content provided for the benefit of others. "One of my strengths has been researching different subjects, documenting that research, and sharing it,"[18] says Lewton-Brain, who freely offers up his knowledge with the same generous spirit he encountered when visiting those village smiths during his trip round the world.

One area he has investigated extensively is gold applications and patinations, which he showcases in oval brooches resembling miniature abstract paintings. Experiments with fusion overlay, incised overlay and inlay, use of resists, doublée and keum-boo (the Korean technique of applying gold foil to silver) have produced a multitude of painterly effects ranging from variegated surfaces rich in blue, green and earth tones, to gold fields crossed with sketchy lines suggesting geological fissures.

In Lewton-Brain's recent "Cage" series, the artist's love of line comes to the fore. Wielding a fusion welder with the spontaneity of a pen, he begins each piece by creating a grid structure from stainless steel wire. On a metaphoric level, Lewton-Brain sees the grid as representing human culture and its self-imposed restrictions.[19] But his grids are a bit wobbly, like an old wooden fence, a reminder that the constructed world is not immune to the forces of nature.

Some grids contain gemstones or pebbles, suggesting humankind's desire to control those forces. But nature gets its own back when the grid is electroformed, gemstones and all,



Cagebox, 2009
stainless steel, electroformed
copper, electroformed 24k gold
3 ¾ x 2 ¾ x ¾"

in a copper-acid bath that "grows" the copper on the wire in a process akin to coral growing on shipwrecks. "It develops this really nice tension between structure and nature, and I think that tension is beautiful,"[20] says the artist.

The pieces then spend three days in a tumbler, where they reach a work-hardened state that ensures durability. The final step is to have them electroformed in 24k gold, at the maximum thickness industry permits, so that the surface won't wear off.[21] The result is the luxurious aura of solid gold without the heavy weight (or price point!).

Lewton-Brain's "cages" range from massive neckpieces to towering rings to minimalist earrings. Most unorthodox are the ear cages, which relate back to Lewton-Brain's engagement with body and performance art, a path he pursued in conjunction with his wife, Dee Fontans, a Calgary-based jeweler, performance artist, and radical fashion designer.

Performance art too? How does one artist cover so much ground? "I think that in the crafts, we can and do operate all over the map at the same time, in the same day,"[22] says Lewton-Brain, who is clearly not one to be constrained by convention. In a conference paper entitled "You Can Create Your Own Life With Your Own Hands," Lewton-Brain's tells emerging metalsmiths that: "You can have what you want without compromise."[23] He's living proof of that statement.

Barbara Isherwood is a Toronto-based writer, broadcaster and educator.

1. Sources for this article include an interview between the author and the artist on August 18, 2012, and other print and web-based articles and interviews as cited below. http://ggavma.canadacouncil.ca/en/Archive/2012/Winners/Charles%20Lewton-Brain.aspx
2. Interview between author and Charles-Lewton Brain, August 18, 2012.
3. Ibid.
4. www.brainpress.com/LewtonBrain.html.
5. Jay Whaley's Metalsmith BenchTalk by Whaley Studios, June 17, 2010, via http://www.blogtalkradio.com/whaleystudios/2010/06/17/metalsmith-benchtalk-with-charles-lewton-brain.
6. Ibid.
7. He eventually became sufficiently fluent in German to translate Erhard Brepohl's classic 560-page reference book, *The Theory and Practice of Goldsmithing.*
8. Charles Lewton-Brain, "Where Fold-Forming Came From," excerpt from the book *Fold-Forming*, via www.ganoksin.com/borisat/nenam/fold-forming-history.htm.
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14. Whaley, June 17, 2010.
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18. Whaley, June 17, 2010.
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Reviews

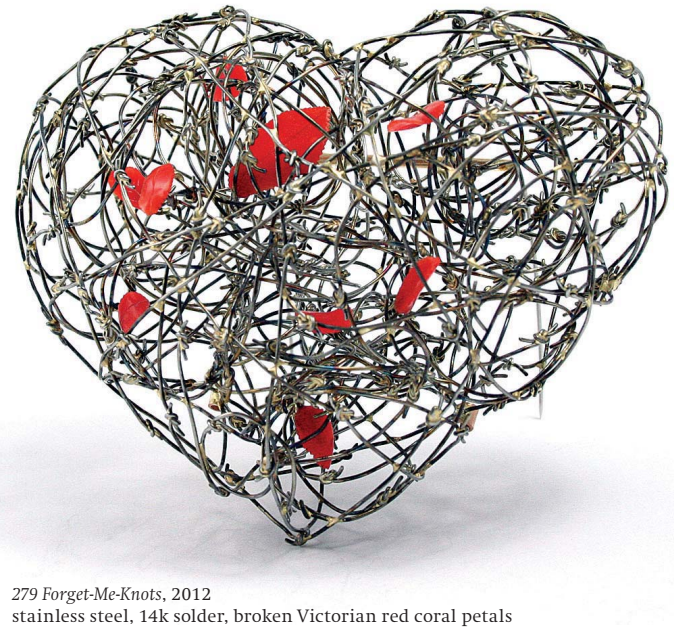
"Lola Brooks: Charted Territories"

Sienna Gallery, Lenox, Massachusetts
April 20–May 19, 2012

by Andrea DiNoto

Of the eight pieces in Lola Brooks' new collection of poetically conceived jewelry, five are large volumetric hearts, each given an evocative, sometimes punning, title. Three of these are cage-like, filled variously with trembling, antique ivory roses (*Forsaken Garden Heart*), snippets of butterfly wings (*Pteromerhanophobia-Fear of Flying*), and broken bits of Italian coral (*279 Forget-Me-Knots*) caught in a tangle of steel wire. Another massive heart mimics a locket (*Heart Lock*)–it's actually a solid, chainmail steel heart impaled with a key that turns to release the pendant from its formidable chain. Another heart is a brooch, somewhat resembling a geodesic dome (*Stealed Heart*), constructed of faceted steel "jewels" set in gold bezels soldered rim to rim. The remaining three pieces include two massive chainmail bow necklaces (*Bowknot*, and *Heartknot*) and one tear-drop pendant necklace set with faceted blood-red garnets garnished with delicate steel bows (*Bloodbowsandtears*). The collective effect of these pieces is that of a complex explosion of ornament and emotion such as we've come to expect from the artist's Pop Romantic sensibility. In this exhibition Brooks continues to explore both heart and bow as formal challenges to their clichéd associations, in the process shaping each piece as a metaphorical wellspring of sentiment and obsession. The voluptuously scaled cage brooches (whose shape Brooks has bodaciously likened to "JLo's ass") are constructed of rigid stainless steel chain soldered with gold links. In Brooks' inversion of material hierarchies, nonprecious steel takes precedence over gold. Inside the cage, decorative elements are clustered like so much mesmerizing eye candy. Indeed, many of these hearts do nicely as trompe l'oeil confections, but as jewelry they appear to reference the huge 18th-century ornaments, called stomachers, worn ostentatiously on the bodice, with diamonds set *en tremblant* that vibrate with the wearer's slightest movements. Brooks' steel hearts tremble with emotional resonance, but they also rock, as does Brooks herself, whose funky personal style coupled with her celebrated skills as a metalsmith and teacher, has earned her unique diva status in the art-jewelry field. A self-described "eBay fanatic," Brooks spends hours online in a quest for materials that might spark ideas for jewelry or simply satisfy her immediate hunger for collecting.

The heart and bow are both staples of the Victorian jewelry vocabulary, and also of the costume jewelry repertoire. Brooks plays on these associations with daring experiments in scale that she invests with personal context—hence the



279 Forget-Me-Knots, 2012
stainless steel, 14k solder, broken Victorian red coral petals
3 x 3 x 1 ½"

Heart Lock, 2012
stainless steel chain, gold solder
diam. 17"

show's title. The bow-knot necklace weighs in at three-and-a-half pounds, unwearable for many, Brooks admits, but somehow comforting to herself, "like the protective lead apron at the dentist's office." On a lighter note, the butterfly wings that inhabit the *Fear of Flying* brooch fell out of a book reclaimed—with the help of Fedex—from a former boy friend who, Brooks says, absconded with a valuable necklace. ("I dated a sociopath," she cracks.) By enclosing these ephemeral, iridescent fragments in her heart, so to speak, she has presumably rescued something of sentimental value from a relationship gone terribly wrong. But to impose Brooks' personal readings on any of these "charted territories" would detract from their mystery; better a viewer imbues them with her own associations. In this way, Brooks' stated purpose in this show—to invoke "love, loss, femininity, and beauty "—is most fully realized. The cage-heart brooches, by far the most provocative and entrancing of all those on view, are a triumph for Brooks, poetic objects that literalize the woman's heart, not just as a lonely hunter but as well a commodious receptacle that easily accommodates pleasure, pain, obsession, love and memory.

Andrea DiNoto is a New-York based writer on art and design.

"Forces of Nature"

Embassy of Australia,
Washington, DC
November 19, 2011 - February 10, 2012

by Sarah Tanguy

The passing flutter of a feather and the coiled spiral of a shell are two of the many dynamic images in *Forces of Nature,* a sensitively curated exhibition by Melissa Keys. Against the backdrop of environmental activism, Keys highlights the role natural forces play in inspiring thirteen Australian artists, both settlers and those indigenous to the region. The artists' materials—largely native flora and fauna—and the works themselves, reflect the influence of native traditions on contemporary practice, while offering a nuanced look at the artists' personal engagement with nature as they draw on the history of the land and its dwellers.

The work of indigenous artists Elder Auntie Corrie Fullard, her daughter, Jeanette James, and Aubrey Tigan provide a telling start. Residents of Tasmania's Fumeaux Islands, Fullard and James update the female custom of stringing in their simple, yet visually striking necklaces. Made respectively out of mariner and kelp shells and echidna spine needles, these materials seem to burst from their tight sequencing with hidden energy. By contrast, Tigan, who is part of the Bardi coastal community in Western Australia, creates exhibition versions of male ceremonial objects out of pearl shells. Incised with geometric patterns referencing navigation, body painting, rain, and water, the troughs are filled in with red ochre, the color of blood and life and the perfect foil to the shells' polished iridescent surfaces.

Another resident of Western Australia, Sarah Elson, pays homage to local flora in her arresting wall installation, *Anigozanthos (eudaimonia).* Using recycled alloys of silver, copper, bronze and gold, Elson painstakingly cast 300 dried kangaroo paws, a tubular perennial with clusters of upright fuzzy spikes, common to this region. Though mounted specimen style on a grid, each casting appears as a unique transformation of its namesake, while in the aggregate they assume a dark and slightly threatening beauty. In contrast, *Weather Vanes*, created by occasional collaborators fiber artist Ilka White and jeweler Nicky Hepburn, emanates an airy grace. Their installation, which features seabird feathers flourishing from silver spindles, makes for a breathtaking study in texture and palette. Hepburn's ingeniously wrought rings made from cuttlefish, leaf, and bark are also represented. The inspiration for both projects was a 250-kilometer trek known as the Great South West Walk, a three-week journey across heritage sites and several national parks, sand dunes, crags, and estuaries.

Sue Kneebone mines ambivalent memories of her settler background in the northwest of South Australia for her disquieting installation *Time Tales;* four oval, wall-mounted works intended to evoke environmental concerns—specifically, introduced species and farming methods—juxtapose family photos with feral fur and found artifacts, including bird skulls, shells, and animal horn.

Similarly, Catherine Truman's mixed-media installation *Ongoing Being*, which mimics a natural history display, questions the very definitions of organic and synthetic. Based on her research of museum collections, she intersperses her own limewood and boxwood carvings with plastic, wax, paper, and styrene debris as well as bits of marine sponge,

ILKA WHITE AND NICKY HEPBURN
Weather Vanes, 2011
feathers, metal

SUE KNEEBONE
Time Tales, 2001
mixed-media

eucalyptus twig and bone. In some instances, she creates hybrids, such as a bone fragment that "sprouts" artificial red coral. The resulting tableau is a tour-de-force of cross-identities, as beautiful and whimsical as it is critical of our relation to the natural world.

Both Marian Hosking and Julie Blyfield offer works that express more personal experiences. Hosking's series of open silver boxes reference her suburban upbringing as the child of a metallurgist father and a conservationist mother. In *Norlangie Suburban Box*, she alludes to nature's encompassing presence at the core of a domesticated enclosure: a small box pierced with graphic distillations of tiny plants, hands, birds and rain drops sits next to its larger companion cut with the roof-like chevrons of a house. Similarly, Julie Blyfield masterfully evokes her grandmother's embroidery in the intricate designs of her hammered silver *Flourish Vessel* and *Coiled Shell Brooch*, as well as the iron wire pendants from her *Florescence* series.

Beyond wondrous flashes of reverie and delight, the exhibition creates a sense of place full of visual rhythms and tactile patterns akin to Australia's rich topography. From floral minutiae to vast stretches of land and sea, the works suggest individual ties with nature and oppose embedded commentary with subtlety and invention.

Art historian Sarah Tanguy lives and works in Washington, D.C.

"Knitted, Knotted, Twisted & Twined: The Jewelry of Mary Lee Hu"

Bellevue Art Museum, Washington
February 7 - June 17, 2012

by Judy Wagonfeld

Amid deep purple walls, and in theatrical darkness, an awe-inspiring cache of 100 marvels lies radiating light, as if from the depths of an illuminated cave. Indeed, the Bellevue Art Museum's Mary Lee Hu exhibition envelops the senses, eliciting gasps worthy of the Crown Jewels. Designed by curator Stefano Catalani, this regal, ceremonial staging, with its glowing black-based vitrines, celebrates fifty years of the renowned Northwest artist's work in silver and gold.

Within the symbolism of many cultures, silver connotes the moon, femininity, and serenity, while gold has come to symbolize the sun, masculinity, wealth, and power. All that matters not a bit to Hu. She enlists these metals for their sheer beauty, malleability and lustrous reflectivity. Hu eschews narrative, metaphor, and social commentary. She thinks only of design, structure and body fit. Simplicity dominates to the point of numbering rather than naming pieces.

Hu has never wavered from commitment to a singular material; at first silver, then gold. Despite gold's escalating cost, Hu has stayed her path. Her elegant jewelry—ranging from early macramé earrings to seductive ropes of gold— is not for the weak of pocketbook. Immune to fashion trends, Hu's timeless designs make owners want to pass them down as heirlooms.

After graduating college, Hu taught herself to "draw" with wire by mastering coils and loops, and melting wire ends into balls, techniques that

Bracelet #62, 2002
18k and 22k gold
2 ¾ x 3 ½ x 2 ¾"
COLLECTION OF MUSEUM OF ARTS & DESIGN, NEW YORK.

Choker #40, 1978
fine and sterling silver, 22k gold, lacquered copper
10 x 6 ½ x 1 ½"
COLLECTION OF NATIONAL ORNAMENTAL METAL MUSEUM

led to the creation of life-like insects, lizards, feathery aquatic creatures and even a dragon made for her Chinese husband. But these exercises served merely as a prelude to her consummate achievements.

As she developed her craft, Hu adopted the double twining method of basketry to silver. While living in Taiwan, she discovered banyan trees' tangled roots and vines, inspiration for the wild and wooly silver bird's nest pendant, *Neckpiece #8* (1973). Burgeoning with sinuous dangling silver threads and gold lizards, the pendant is suspended from boar's tusks, a rare use of found objects for the artist. Hu's next project, *Neckpiece #9* (1973) was constructed out of grief after her husband's sudden death, and became a gift of remembrance to herself. The phoenix motif is central to this magnificent piece and, for Hu, references the mythological tale and the symbol of China's Empress. Whiplashing tendrils and airy chainmail wings burst from the bird's body, symbolizing Hu's own rebirth.

Taiwan and extensive travel brought ethnographic and nature-based influences to Hu's jewelry. A delicate, gold-wire peacock nestled in a woven silver necklace (1974) embodies Tibetan art. An elaborate multi-layered basket and a sprawling anemone-like creature attest to brief but superb efforts at sculpture. Her return to jewelry came with explorations of abstraction.

Hu's rudimentary first choker (1974) bends, loops and wraps a single silver wire. Later pendants took the form of bewitching organic floral abstractions of yellow, green and orange lacquered copper wire and silver. Flipping from lavish to austere, Hu designed the captivating Celtic-style "torque" neck rings displayed in the gallery's central case. These one- to two-inch wide collars, woven in a graduated fashion, lie flat on the body.

Bracelets further develop the tubular aesthetic. Segments, linked by hammered silver shapes, yield chic, contemporary square and octagonal shapes. Earrings derived from manipulating "X" shapes led to a geometric obsession. For Hu's first choker ("*Aida*," 1984) of this style, commissioned to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Metropolitan Opera, Hu developed a tessellation technique to abut repeating shapes. It creates tension between positive and negative space and angles and curves, generating harmony. Sadly, due to insurance restrictions, only a photo is seen. However, several other tessellated gold necklaces demonstrate Hu's impeccable skill. Foremost is the X-patterned *Choker #81* (1993), a ravishing enigma of diamond shapes, triangles, gold Xs and eight-pointed open spaces.

Hu taught at the University of Washington for 16 years as a professor of art until her retirement in 2006. One day, in 1998, frustrated by "jeweler's block," she whacked a gold tube and discovered a scrunched ring. It was what Hu needed; a catharsis that liberated spontaneity. Woven gold strips, bent and squashed into rippling ribbons, manifest femininity, a u-turn from restraint to free flowing grace. In one bracelet flat gold strands wend wildly around mesh as if distorted orbits. Necklaces and bracelets, pared to various-sized ropey bands, possess resplendent fluidity. Writhing, buckling, melding and separating lengths ebb and flow in lush organic opulence. These sophisticated masterworks stand at the apex of Hu's phenomenal career. Scrupulously presented by Catalani, the dazzling exhibit casts a magical spell.

Judy Wagonfeld, a freelance writer in Seattle, covers art, travel, food and people for diverse publications.

"Out On A Limb: Contemporary Wood Jewelry"

Racine Art Museum, Wisconsin
February 26 - June 17, 2012

by Kim Cridler

The status of wood in the history of jewelry may be modest measured against organic relatives like shell or feathers, yet few materials seem as sympathetic to the human condition as wood. From cradle to coffin, we know wood's verdant cycles; its fresh-cut smell; the splitting sound; the soft rot of felled logs. Wood helps us leverage tools; it delivers us in great ships or dugout canoes; it cures our meat and warms our bones. Wood retains our cultural histories: we carve the faces of our gods into wood and use it to construct architectural aspirations ancient and modern.

I expected the exhibition "Out On A Limb: Contemporary Wood Jewelry," to make a claim about what wood offers jewelry, the body and the self. But, although the work of several artists linked these concerns, this survey of emerging and established practitioners from around the world seemed more engaged in a colloquial exchange about the pleasure taken

and expressed through wood fabrication.

Carving was the process of choice, but there were exceptions. The imaginative and wild work of Edgar Mosa used wood as found object to monumental effect. The neckpiece *The Month Three #1* was part cartoon, part sermon with six oval beads cored from a trunk, showing layers of bark, sap and hardwood, strung casually on twine. Another satisfying approach drawn from the strength and flexibility of laminated wood was encountered in linear works by Gustav Reyes. His cuffs, brooches, and neckpieces were spontaneous and supple featuring lightly finished satiny grain.

Bruce Metcalf transformed wood and other common materials into hyper-real compositions. A sensual array, the carved elements of *Featherhead*, included a peach, plump red blood cells, and a bubbly mass of fledging gold feathers. You could perceive the sweetness of peach, the salty blood, and the fresh astringency of stylized fronds. Metcalf's work transcends contrivance to yield a sticky mind/body embrace. It is powerfully weird. Faceted wood forms painted opaque Pop hues in works by Michael Dale Bernard crest on waves of frothy ornament. Although referencing wood as material, these pieces seem more indebted to the sophisticated formal qualities and production methods of costume jewelry.

Most artists favored a kind of carved illusion softened by wood's formal and symbolic qualities. Such pieces included Julia Harrison's *Here is My Spout*, a rosy engorged nipple with a mouth-like expression of resigned determination, and Daniel DiCaprio's *Ripening*, a lipped bulge erupting with fine gold hairs that reached forward to give a kiss or some other blessing. The luxurious rings by Christine Brandt were enormous knuckle-busters of fluid ebony anchoring crystalline blooms. Fusing mineral and vegetable, they alluded to an alchemical power on the hand. Using wood's grained growth, Flóra Vági's circular carved oak pieces seemed to say "yes" to beauty, "yes" to generation, "yes" to the way wood absorbs paint.

Tina Rath's plush neckpieces were presented with "Wanderlux," her delicately sprawling installation of pristine maple boxes sprouting lush life forms. Close looking within this world of finely wrought wood, metal, fiber, and ivory was pleasurable but disrupted by barely concealed drawers and pin-backs. This was a nagging reminder of the limits of looking and my own frustration at a perceived multi-tasking that can rob work of its own formal and conceptual potential.

The talisman-like work of Sharon Church united jewelry and wood through visions of the natural world that challenged and reconciled. The unfolding *Empress* demanded to be actively held and offered, more jewel than jewelry. Simultaneously blooming and dying, the carved petals surged forward embodying our own mortal awareness. Lastly, Julia Walter's work made me question everything about jewelry, let alone wood. *Brooch* pulled together hunks of balsa wood hewn into irregular facets and dyed a urine-yellow. Awkward and humble with a soft hairy surface of raised grain, these ungainly chunks seemed to be coming together and falling apart at the same time. Just like us.

FLÓRA VÁGI
Blooming Series: Papavero II Brooch, 2009
oak, enamel, steel
diam. 2 ¾"
PHOTO: FLÓRA VÁGI

EDGAR MOSA
The Month Three #1, 2010
wood
11 x 11 x 2"
COURTESY OF GALERIE LOUISE SMIT

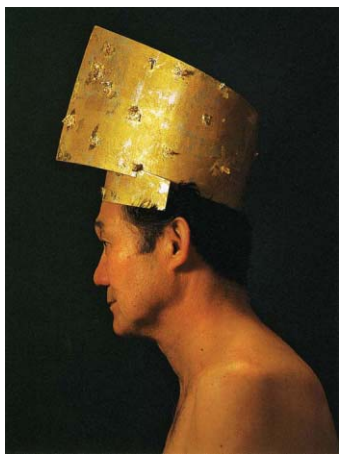
Kim Cridler is is an artist and educator living in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Yasuki Hiramatsu (1926–2012)

BY HELEN WILLIAMS DRUTT ENGLISH

PAST ENCOUNTERS WITH Yasuki Hiramatsu catalyzed memories upon his death on April 11, 2012, in Hokkaido, Japan. Hiramatsu lived at the beginning of the Showa era, at a time when Japan, suffering from the aftermath of World War II, was still occupied by the allies. Sweeping postwar reforms made it possible for him to enter the Western world in the mid-1960s where he bonded with his contemporaries in both Europe and America.

His connections with American goldsmiths were established when Olaf Skoogfors, Stanley Lechtzin, and Miye Matsukata (American, born Japan) were invited to exhibit in Tokyo in 1968. The global ties were further strengthened in 1971 when Skoogfors, Lechtzin, and Hiramatsu exhibited together in Curt Heigel's Gold + Silber, Schmuck + Great, in Nuremberg, Germany. Wendy Ramshaw, David Watkins, Claus Bury, and Hermann Jünger, among others, were also included, creating a communicative international circle of colleagues. In 1978, Albert Paley, Watkins, Arline Fisch, and Jünger joined Hiramatsu in Kyoto for the World Craft Conference (WCC), where he led the program for the metals section. His work had already been exhibited in Schmuck und Gerat, Handwerksmesse, Munich, 1964, and Tendenzen, Schmuckmuseum, at the invitation of Falk, in 1967.



Yasuki Hiramatsu, 1991, wearing a crown of his own creation

Gold brooch by Yasuki Hiramatsu

Selected exhibitions continued with Schmuck International 1900–1980, Künstlerhaus, Vienna, masterminded by Peter Skubic for the WCC, and Ornamenta I, at the Schmuckmuseum, Pforzheim, in 1989, under the leadership of Fritz Falk. Hiramatsu's bonds with Europe and America continued to strengthen. David Watkins invited him to conduct a master class in 1990–91 at the Royal College of Art, along with Robert Smit, from Amsterdam, and Elizabeth Kodre Defner, from Vienna. Encounters in America included invitations to participate in "Jewelry International" (1984), at the American Craft Museum; "Ahead of Fashion: Hats of the 20th Century" (1993) at the Philadelphia Museum of Art and in the traveling "Brooching It Diplomatically: A Tribute to Madeleine K. Albright" (1998).

Hiramatsu's forms remained constant throughout the decades—simple geometric shapes made from crushed sheets of gold or silver, whose surfaces featured subtle linear decoration. Pendants fabricated from ribbons of gold flowed from a circular metal wire that captured light like a waterfall. From 1973, open cage-like constructed rectangles and squares became his signature works. Hiramatsu was also celebrated for crowns fashioned from sheets of gold on aluminum, reminiscent of Shinto priests' headdresses. Images of Hiramatsu wearing such a crown became the iconic portrait of the artist.

Born in Osaka on April 30, 1926, the third generation of a family dedicated to the art of metalsmithing, Hiramatsu attended Tokyo University of Arts and Music, graduating in 1952. He pursued his craft, adapting techniques formally used for weapons and hollowware, to make jewelry. In 1963, he returned as a full professor, and remained on the faculty until his retirement thirty years later. His son, Kozo, has continued the family tradition and artistic involvement in Yasuki's studio.

Hiramatsu's works are included in many private and public collections throughout the world, including the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo; V&A Museum, London; Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich; Schmuckmuseum, Pforzheim; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Helen Williams Drutt Collection, Museum für Kunsthandwerk, Hamburg; and the Royal College of Art, London.

As director of the Japan Jewelry Designers Association, Hiramatsu engaged artists from the West to exhibit in Japan, bringing together the best of the international art jewelry world. He received numerous awards in his native country for his work, and in 1991 was presented with the 41st Craft Award of Excellence by the Japanese Ministry of Education. In 1994, he was the first Asian artist to be selected for the prestigious Golden Ring of Honour from the Gesellschaft für Goldschmiedekunst, in Hanau. Tradition mandates that the ring be created, in response, in the form of an eagle, by the previous recipient. Anton Cepka designed the ring that Hiramatsu received, and Hiramatsu, in turn, created a ring for Giampaolo Babetto.

Yasuki Hiramatsu's death marks the end of a special epoch in the history of contemporary jewelry in Japan. He was to Tokyo what Herman Junger was to Munich. His presence held together the reigns of East and West for four decades.

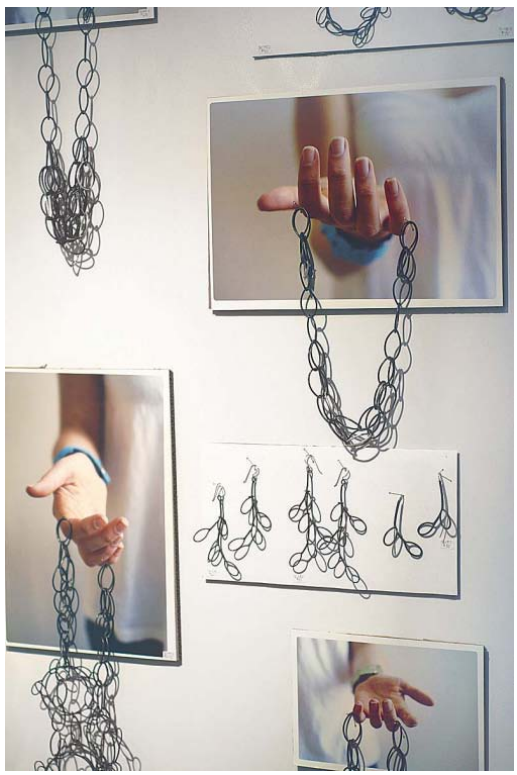
Helen Williams Drutt English, is an author, curatorial consultant, educator, and collector.

Please Touch

BY MEGAN AUMAN

In *Why We Buy: The Science of Shopping*, retail guru Paco Underhill asks, "When does a shopper actually possess something?" Not, he explains, at the moment when money changes hands. Rather, possession occurs as an "emotional and spiritual moment" more likely to take place after a customer has engaged with the object on a physical level—that is, after having touched it. This is especially true for jewelry. Because jewelry, or at least most jewelry purchased, is meant to be worn, the touch can be the crucial step between "just looking" and making the sale.

Brick-and-mortar stores and craft shows still enjoy one important advantage over online vendors in that they offer the tactile experience shoppers crave. What inducement would a person need to forgo the convenience of online shopping other than the opportunity to interact directly with items on a physical, tangible level?



The author's own jewelry trade show display at The New York International Gift Fair, January 2010.

We crave touch, yet as customers we often encounter signals—from locked display cases to literal signage—that physical touch is forbidden. Such deterrents to purchase, explains Underhill, are a common retail error. "The main function of a store is to foster shopper-merchandise contact," he emphasizes, and it should not only be allowed, but encouraged. The most effective jewelry salespeople are constantly angling to get shoppers to first touch, then try on, an item. Often it's a subtle dance in which the shopper is suddenly, almost as if by surprise, wearing the item she admired.

Admittedly, fear of theft keeps many jewelry products out of fingers' reach until the customer makes a direct request. Yet, unless a store is dealing in very rare or expensive items, the risk of theft may be nominal compared with potential lost sales revenue because a customer had not been able to make that first, important tactile connection. As shoppers we have been trained to hesitate before touching a seemingly valuable item (or at least feel guilty about our impulse to touch) so the seller must often initiate contact. Many sellers resort to verbal commands, such as inviting a customer to "feel free to try anything on." But, if stated too abruptly, such a statement might cause a person to actually back away from the merchandise.

To create a touch-friendly environment, visual merchandisers rely on non-verbal cues such as textures in displays and placing the most touch-worthy pieces as close to shoppers as possible. But the simplest solution is to just pick up an item and place it in a customer's hands. Thanks to mirror neurons in our brains, we often unconsciously imitate the behavior of others. So, when someone extends a piece of jewelry for inspection, the customer in turn can't help but extend her hands to receive it. This subtle action effectively encourages a potential consumer to take initial possession of a piece.

The handoff also acts as a handshake, breaking the invisible plane of personal space between buyer and seller. A certain level of intimacy is required when helping a customer try on a necklace or bracelet. Actively engaged in the physical and tactile experience that sent her shopping in the first place, the typical customer will invariably delight in the seller's gentle urging to try on multiple items in search of the right one. As the shopper is lead through the touch/hold/try progression, the question becomes not whether she will buy, but "which one should I buy?"

Once the piece is on the shopper, you've attained the penultimate sales goal. It follows that if touching or holding an object helps a person mentally "take possession" of it, actually wearing the piece will surely seal the deal. All that remains is breaking that final touch barrier in the sales process: getting the customer to hand you her payment. As Underhill explains, once an item is in a person's hands, they begin the process of possessing it. "Paying for it is a mere technicality."

Megan Auman is a Pennsylvania-based designer, metalsmith, and educator

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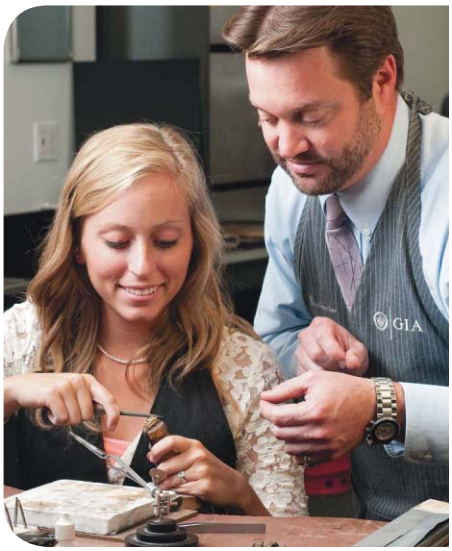

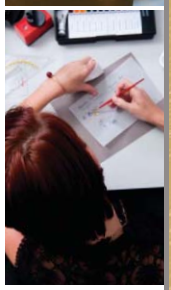

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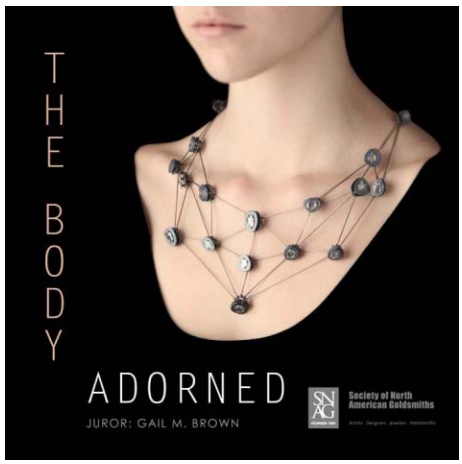
BY DANA SINGER



Cover of the catalogue for SNAG's online exhibition, "The Body Adorned"

Speakers at SNAG's "Emerging Artists" talks at 2012 SOFA Chicago, from l to r: Emanuela Duca, Andrew Kuebeck, and Heejin Hwang

The Body Adorned

In October 2012, SNAG unveiled "The Body Adorned," the first of its annual virtual exhibitions. This inaugural online exhibition, launched in conjunction with American Craft Week, was juried by independent curator Gail M. Brown, who explores "adornment as experience," art jewelry exhibited on the landscape of the body. Thirty artists, including both established and younger makers, were selected to participate, among them Sandra Enterline, Nancy Worden, Satomi Kawai, and John-Thomas Richard. The exhibition catalog is available through Blurb.com.

SNAG's next virtual exhibition, scheduled for October 2013, will be "Contemporary Goldsmithing: Tradition & Excellence." Jurors will include jewelry designer George Sawyer and two others still to be determined. Thank you to Nicole Jacquard, Natalie O'Neal, Social Design House, and Christine Sundt for bringing SNAG's vision for this digital exhibition to life.

SNAG Lectures at SOFA Chicago

For the twelfth year running, SNAG presented three lectures as part of the 2012 SOFA Chicago Salon Lecture Series, coordinated by Donald Friedlich. Our annual "Emerging Artists" talks featured Heejin Hwang, Andrew Kuebeck, and Emanuela Duca on the development of their engaging jewelry. Expanding upon *Metalsmith*'s 2012 Exhibition in Print, "Gothic Jewelry: Sinister Pleasures" (and its related exhibit at SOFA Chicago), Marjorie Simon, craft writer and jeweler, discussed Gothic influence and inspiration in contemporary jewelry. And in a talk titled "Killer Jewels," Canadian artist and jeweler Paul McClure shared his fascination with microbiology, pathology, and genetics to reveal the attraction and fear we have of invisible forces lurking within.

Suzanne Pugh Joins *Metalsmith*'s Editorial Advisory Committee

Suzanne Pugh, a metalsmith, jeweler, and maker of functional and sculptural objects currently teaches metals at the City College of San Francisco and manages its gallery. We welcome her to *Metalsmith*'s Editorial Advisory Committee. Pugh replaces outgoing committee member and Chair, Marjorie Simon.

Suzanne Pugh, new member of Metalsmith's *Editorial Advisory Committee*

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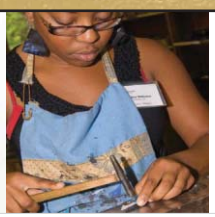

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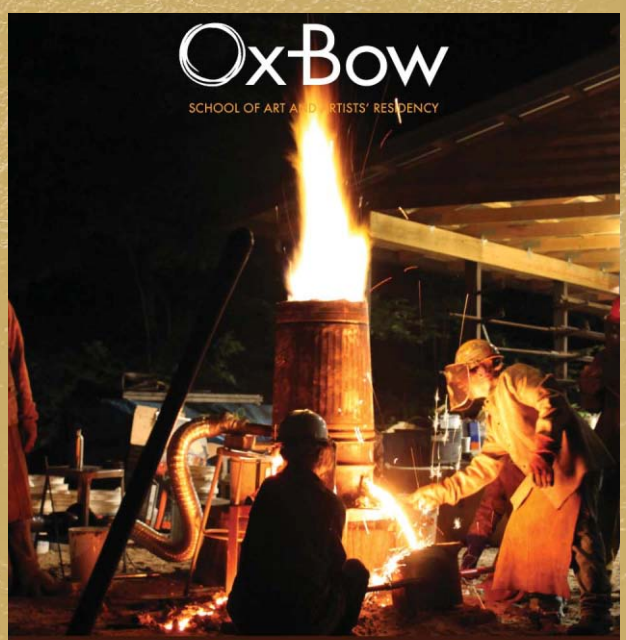

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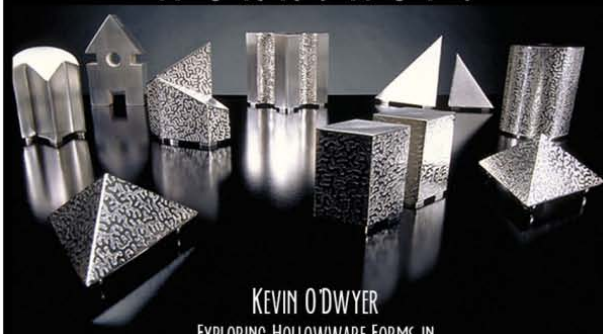

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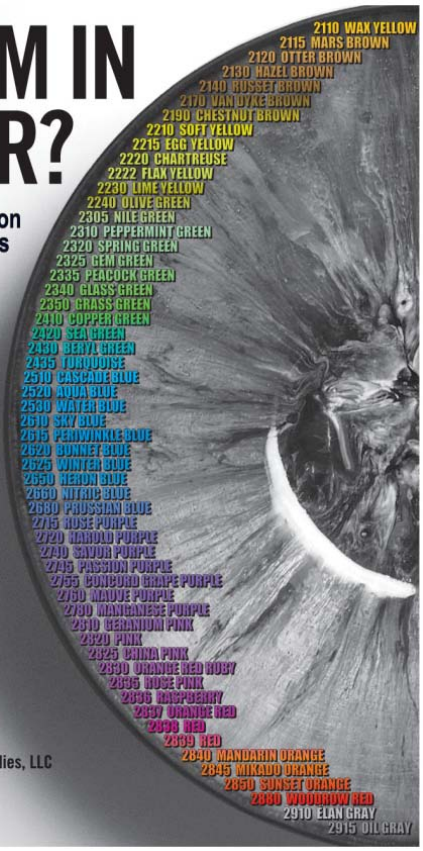

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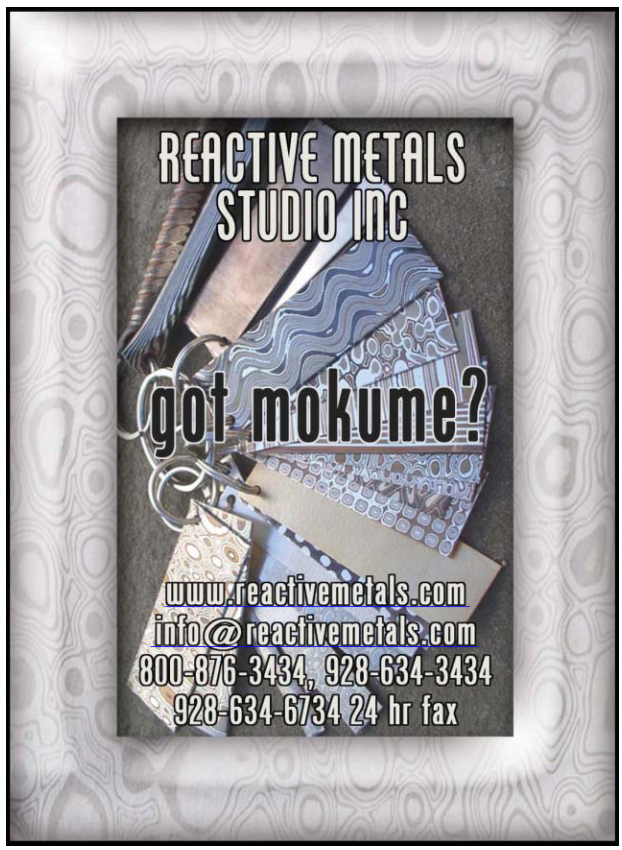

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metalsmith index of advertisers vol. 33 no. 1

Academy of Art University 65
Arrowmont School of Arts & Crafts 63
Atelier Hg & Company, Inc. 9
Billanti Casting Co, Inc. 67
Buyers Market of American Craft 11
Contemporary Jewelry Design . . . . . Cover
Craftboston 5
Creative Metalsmiths 11
Creative Metalworks School of Design 64
Davide Bigazzi 64
Denise Betesh 1
Élise Bergeron 9
Facere Jewelry Art Gallery 9
Gem & Lapidary Wholesalers 66
GIA 61
globalDESIGN 7
Guilded Lynx Jewelry and Metal Arts Studio 63
Halstead Bead, Inc. 67
Hauser & Miller 66
Haystack Mountain 64
Helen Blythe-Hart 3
Idyllwild Arts 63
Initiatives in Art and Culture 8
Jack Da Silva Metal Design 8
Jewelry Arts Institute 72
Kerr Corporation 69
Mesa Arts Center 66
METALSMITH 8
MJSA 68
Noble Gift Packaging 71
Otto Frei . . . . . Cover
Ox-Bow 63
Penland School of Crafts 65
Reactive Metals Studio 67
Revere Academy 61
Rio Grande . . . . . Cover
Schlaifer's Enameling Supplies 67
SNAG Conference 2013 10
SOFA Chicago 6
Studio Jewelers, Ltd. 65
Tripp Lake Camp 64
United Precious Metals Refining 70
Wayne Art Center 8

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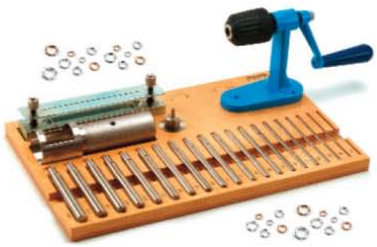

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